



*Geo: Vertue ad Vivum*

*delin et Sculpsit.*

*Matthew Henry V.D.M.*



# AN EXPOSITION

ON THE

## Old and New Testament,

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IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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CONTAINING,

GENESIS.  
EXODUS.  
LEVITICUS.  
NUMBERS.  
DEUTERONOMY.  
JOSHUA.

JUDGES. *K Bible*  
RUTH.  
I SAMUEL.  
II SAMUEL.  
I KINGS.  
II KINGS.

WHEREIN

Each CHAPTER is summed up in its CONTENTS; the sacred Text inserted at large in distinct paragraphs; each paragraph reduced to its proper Heads; the sense given, and largely illustrated:

WITH

Practical Remarks and Observations.

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By *MATTHEW HENRY*,  
late Minister of the Gospel.

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The Fourth Edition.

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LONDON:

Printed for JOHN and PAUL KNAPTON in *Ludgate-street*, THOMAS COX under the *Royal-Exchange*,  
RICHARD FORD and RICHARD HETT both in the *Poultry*, AARON WARD in *Little-Britain*,  
and THOMAS LONGMAN in *Pater Noster Row*. 1737.







A N  
E X P O S I T I O N

Of the Five BOOKS of

M O S E S,

V I Z.

Genesis,  
Exodus,  
Leviticus,

Numbers,  
Deuteronomy.

W H E R E I N

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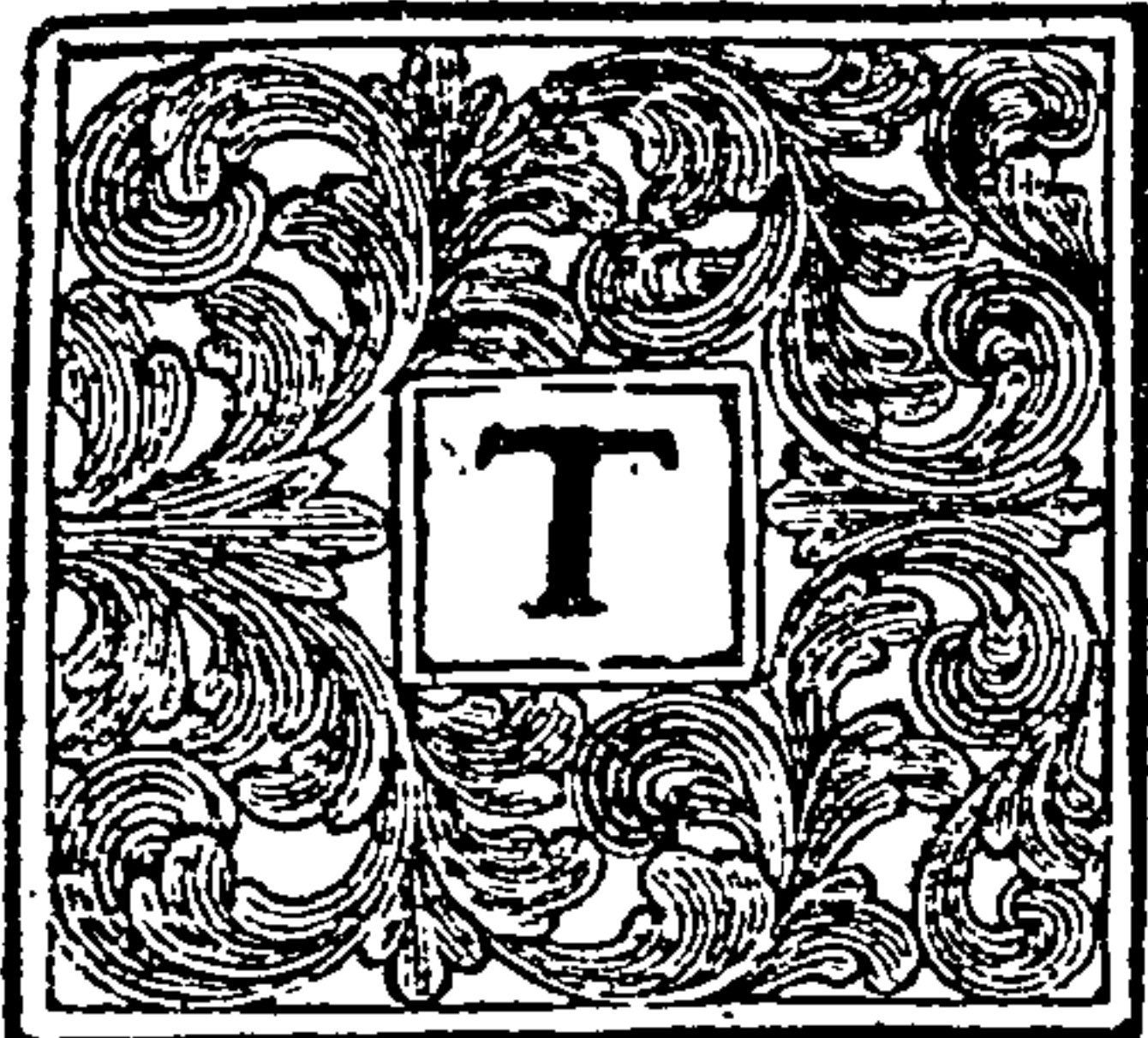
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# THE P R E F A C E.



**T**HOUGH it is most my concern, that I be able to give a good account to God and my own conscience, yet, perhaps, it will be expected, that I give the world also some account of this bold undertaking; which I shall endeavour to do with all plainness, and as one who believes, That if men must be reckoned with in the great day, for every vain and idle word they speak, much more for every vain and idle line they write.

And it may be of use, in the first place, to lay down these great and sacred Principles, which I go upon and am governed by in this endeavour, to explain and improve these portions of holy Writ; which endeavour I humbly offer to the service of those (and to those only I expect it will be acceptable) who agree with me in these six principles.

1. That Religion is the one thing needful; that to know, and love, and fear God our Maker, and in all the instances both of devout affection, and of a good conversation, to keep his commandments, Eccl. xii. 13. is, without doubt, the whole of man; it is all in all to him. This the wisest of men, after a close and copious argument in his Ecclesiastes, lays down as the conclusion of his whole matter (the Quod erat demonstrandum of his whole discourse) and therefore I may be allowed to lay it down as a postulatum, and the foundation of this whole matter.

It is necessary to mankind in general that there should be religion in the world, absolutely necessary for the preservation of the honour of the human nature, and no less so for the preservation of the order of human societies. It is necessary to each of us in particular that we be religious; we cannot otherwise answer the end of our creation, obtain the favour of our Creator, make ourselves easy now or happy for ever. A man that is endued with the powers of reason, by which he is capable of knowing, serving, glorifying and enjoying his Maker, and yet lives without God in the world, is certainly the most despicable and the most miserable animal under the sun.

2. That divine Revelation is necessary to true religion, to the being and support of it. That faith, without which it is impossible to please God, cannot come to any perfection by seeing the works of God, but it must come by hearing the word of God, Rom. x. 17. The rational soul, since it received that fatal shock by the fall, cannot have or maintain that just regard to the great Author of its being, that observance of him, and expectation from him, which are both its duty and felicity, without some supernatural discovery made by himself of himself, and of his mind and will. Natural light, no doubt, is of excellent use, as far as it goes, but it is necessary that there be a divine revelation to rectify its mistakes and make up its deficiencies, to help us out there where the light of nature leaves us quite at a loss, especially in the way and method of man's recovery from his lapsed state, and his restoration to his Maker's favour, which he cannot but be conscious to himself of the loss of, finding, by sad experience, his own present state to be sinful and miserable. Our own reason shews us the wound, but nothing short of a divine revelation can discover to us a remedy to be confided in.

The case and character of those nations of the earth which had no other guide in their devotions but that of natural light, with some remains of the divine institution of sacrifices received by tradition from their fathers, plainly shews how necessary divine revelation is to the subsistence of religion, for those that had not the word of God soon lost God himself became vain in their imaginations concerning him, and prodigiously vile and absurd in their worships and divinations. It is true, the Jews, who had the benefit of divine revelation, lapsed sometimes into idolatry, and admitted very gross corruptions, yet, with the help of the law and the prophets, they recovered and reformed; whereas the best and most admired philosophy of the heathen could never do any thing towards the cure of the vulgar idolatry, or so much as offered to remove any of those barbarous and ridiculous rites of their religion, which were the scandal and reproach of the human nature. Let men therefore pretend what they will, deists are or will be atheists; and those that, under colour of admiring the oracles of reason, set aside as useless the oracles of God, undermine the foundations of all religion, and do what they can to cut off all communication between man and his Maker, and to set that noble creature on a level with the beasts that perish.

3. That divine revelation is not now to be found or expected any where but in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and there it is. It is true, there was religion and divine revelation before there was any written word; but to argue from thence that the scriptures are not now necessary, is as absurd as it would be to argue that the world might do well enough without the sun, because in the Creation the world had light three days before the sun was made.

Divine revelations, when first given, were confirmed by Visions, Miracles and Prophecy, but they were to be transmitted to distant regions and future ages, with their proofs and evidences, by writing, the surest way of conveyance, and by which the knowledge of other memorable things is preserved and propagated: we have reason to think that even the Ten Commandments, though spoken with such solemnity at mount Sinai, would have been long before this lost and forgotten, if they had been handed down by tradition only and never had been put in writing: it is that which is written that remains.



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*The Scripture indeed is not compiled as a methodical system or body of divinity, secundum artem, but in several ways of writing (histories, laws, prophecies, songs, epistles, and even Proverbs) at several times, and by several hands, as infinite Wisdom saw fit, the end is effectually obtained; such things are plainly supposed and taken for granted, and such things are expressly revealed and made known as, being all put together, sufficiently inform us of all the truths and laws of that holy religion we are to believe, and be governed by.*

*That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. iii. 16. and that holy men spake and wrote as they were moved by the holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. we are sure, but who dares pretend to describe that inspiration? None knows the way of the Spirit, nor how the thoughts were formed in the heart of him that was inspired, no more than we know the way of the soul into the body, or how the bones are formed in the womb of her that is with child, Eccl. xi. 5. but we may be sure that the blessed Spirit did not only habitually prepare and qualify the penmen of Scripture for that service, and put it into their hearts to write, but did likewise assist their understandings and memories, in recording those things which they themselves had the knowledge of, and effectually secure them from error and mistake, and what they could not know but by revelation, (as for instance, Gen. i. and John i.) the same blessed Spirit gave them clear and satisfactory information of. And, no doubt, as far as was necessary to the end designed, they were directed by the Spirit, even in the language and expression, for there were words which the holy Ghost taught, 1 Cor. ii. 13. and God saith to the prophet, Thou shalt speak with my words, Ezek. iii. 4. However, it is not material to us who drew up the statute, nor what liberty he took in using his own words, when it is ratified it is become the legislator's act, and binds the subject to observe the true intent and meaning of it.*

*The Scripture proves its divine authority and original both to the wise and to the unwise; even to the unwise and least thinking part of mankind, it is abundantly proved by the many uncontestable miracles wrought by Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, for the confirmation of its Truths and Laws: it would be an intolerable reproach to eternal Truth to suppose this divine seal affixed to a lie. Besides this, to the more wise and thinking, to the more considerate and contemplative, it recommends itself by those innate excellencies which are self-evident characteristics of its divine original. If we look wisely we shall soon be aware of God's image and superscription upon it. A mind rightly disposed by an humble sincere subjection to its Maker, will easily discover the image of God's wisdom in the awful depth of its mysteries; the image of his sovereignty in the commanding majesty of its style; the image of his unity in the wonderful harmony and symmetry of all its parts; the image of his holiness in the unspotted purity of its precepts; and the image of his goodness in the manifest tendency of the whole to the welfare and happiness of mankind in both worlds; in short, it is a work that fathers itself.*

*And as atheists, so deists, notwithstanding their vainglorious pretensions to reason, as if wisdom must die with them, run themselves upon the grossest and most dishonourable absurdities imaginable; for if the Scriptures be not the Word of God, then there is no divine revelation now in the world, no discovery at all of God's mind concerning our duty and happiness: so that let a man be never so desirous and solicitous to do his Maker's will, he must, without remedy, perish in the ignorance of it, since there is no book but this, that will undertake to tell him what it is; a consequence which can by no means be reconciled to the idea we have of the divine goodness. And (which is no less an absurdity) if the Scriptures be not really a divine revelation, they are certainly as great a cheat as ever was put upon the world: but we have no reason to think them so; for bad men would never write so good a Book, nor would Satan have so little subtilty as to help to cast out Satan; and good men would never do so ill a thing as to counterfeit the broad-seal of heaven, and to affix it to a patent of their own framing, though in itself never so just: No, These are not the words of him that hath a devil.*

*4. That the scriptures of the Old and New Testament were purposely designed for our learning. It was possible they might be a divine revelation to those into whose hands they were first put, and yet we, at this distance, be no way concerned in them; but it is certain, they were intended to be of universal and perpetual use and obligation to all persons, in all places, and all ages, that have the knowledge of them, even unto us upon whom the ends of the world are come, Rom. xv. 4. Though we are not under the Law as a covenant of innocency, for then being guilty we should unavoidably perish under its curse, yet it is not therefore an antiquated statute, but a standing declaration of the will of God concerning good and evil, sin and duty, and its obligation to obedience is in as full force and virtue as ever: and unto us is the Gospel of the ceremonial Law preached as well as unto them to whom it was first delivered, and much more plainly, Heb. iv. 2. The histories of the Old Testament were written for our admonition and direction, 1 Cor. x. 11. and not barely for the information and entertainment of the curious. The prophets, though long since dead, prophesy again by their writings, Heb. xii. 5. before peoples and nations; and Solomon's exhortation speaketh unto us as unto sons.*

*The subject of the holy Scripture is universal and perpetual, and therefore of common concern. It is intended, 1. To revive the universal and perpetual law of nature, the very remains of which (or ruins rather) in natural conscience, give us hints that we must look somewhere else for a fairer copy. 2. To reveal the universal and perpetual law of Grace, which God's common beneficence to the children of men, such as puts them into a better state than that of devils, gives us some ground to expect. The divine authority likewise, which in this Book commands our belief and obedience, is universal and perpetual, and knows no limits either of time or place; it follows, therefore, that every nation and every age, to which these sacred writings are transmitted, is bound to receive them with the same veneration and pious regard that they commanded at their first entrance.*

*Though God hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his son, yet we are not therefore to think that what he spake at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers, Heb. i. 1. is of no use to us, or that the Old Testament is an almanack out of date, no, we are built upon the foundation of the prophets, as well as of the apostles, Christ himself being the corner stone, Eph. ii. 20. in whom both these sides of this blessed building meet and are united: They were those ancient records of the Jewish church which Christ and his apostles so oft referred to, so oft appealed to, and commanded us to search and to take heed to. The preachers of the Gospel, like*



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like Jehosaphat's judges, wherever they went, had this book of the Law with them, and found it a great advantage to them to speak to them that knew the Law, Rom. vii. 1. That celebrated translation of the Old Testament in the Greek tongue by the Seventy, between two and three hundred years before the birth of Christ, was, to the nations a happy preparative for the entertainment of the Gospel, by spreading the knowledge of the Law: for as the New Testament expounds and compleats the Old, and thereby makes it more serviceable to us now, than it was to the Jewish church, so the Old Testament confirms and illustrates the New, and shews us Jesus Christ, the same yesterday that he is to day, and will be for ever.

5. That the holy Scriptures were not only designed for our learning, but are the settled standing rule of our faith and practice, by which we must be governed now, and judged shortly: it is not only a book of general use (so the writings of good and wise men may be) but it is of sovereign and commanding authority; the statute-book of God's kingdom, which our oath of allegiance to him, as our supreme Lord, binds us to the observance of. Whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear, we must be told, that this is the oracle we are to consult, and to be determined by; the touchstone we are to appeal to and try doctrines by; the rule we are to have an eye to, by which we must in every thing order our affections and conversations, and from which we must always take our measures. This is the testimony, this is the law which is bound up and sealed among the disciples, that word, according to which if we do not speak, it is because there is no light in us. Isa. viii. 16, 20.

The making of the light within our rule, which by nature is darkness, and by grace is but a copy of, and conformable to the written Word, is setting the judge above the law; and making the traditions of the Church rivals with the Scripture is no better; it is making the clock, which every one concerned puts backward or forward at pleasure, to correct the sun, that faithful measurer of time and days. These are absurdities which being once granted, thousands follow, as we see by sad experience.

6. That therefore it is the duty of all christians diligently to search the scriptures, and it is the office of ministers to guide and assist them therein. How useful soever this Book of books is in it self, it will be of no use to us if we do not acquaint ourselves with it, by reading it daily, and meditating upon it, that we may understand the mind of God in it, and may apply what we understand to our selves for our direction, rebuke and comfort, as there is occasion. It is the character of the holy and happy man, that his delight is in the law of the Lord, and as an evidence thereof, he converseth with it as his constant companion, and adviseth with it as his most wise and trusty counsellor, for in that law doth he meditate day and night. Psal. i. 2.

It concerns us to be ready in the Scriptures, and to make ourselves so by constant reading and careful observation, and especially by earnest prayer to God for the promised gift of the holy Ghost, whose office it is to bring things to our remembrance which Christ hath said to us, John xiv. 26. that thus we may have some good word or other at hand for our use in our addresses to God, and in our converse with men; in our resistance of Satan, and in communing with our own hearts; and may be able, with the good householder, to bring out of this treasury things new and old, for the entertainment and edification both of ourselves and others. If any thing will make a man of God perfect in this world, will compleat both a christian and a minister, and throughly furnish him for every good work, it must be this. 2 Tim. iii. 17.

It concerns us also to be mighty in the scriptures, as Apollos was, Acts xviii. 24. that is, to be thoroughly acquainted with the true intent and meaning of them, that we may understand what we read, and may not misinterpret or misapply it, but by the conduct of the blessed Spirit, may be led into all truth, John xvi. 13. and may hold it fast in faith and love, and put every part of Scripture to that use for which it was intended. The letter, either of Law or Gospel, profits little without the Spirit.

The ministers of Christ are herein ministers to the Spirit for the good of the church; their business is to open and apply the Scriptures; thence they must fetch their knowledge, thence their doctrines, devotions, directions, and admonitions, and thence their very language and expression. Expounding the Scriptures was the most usual way of preaching in the first and purest ages of the church. What have the Levites to do but to teach Jacob the law, Deut. xxxiii. 10. not only to read it, but to give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading? Neh. viii. 8. which, how shall they do, except some man guide them? Acts viii. 31. As ministers would hardly be believed without Bibles to back them, so Bibles would hardly be understood without ministers to explain them; but if, having both, we perish in ignorance and unbelief, our blood will be upon our own head.

Being fully perswaded therefore of these things, I conclude, that whatever help is offered to good Christians in searching the Scriptures, is real service done to the glory of God, and to the interests of his kingdom among men, and that is it which hath drawn me in to this undertaking, which I have gone about in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, lest I should be found exercising my self in things too high for me, 1 Cor. ii. 3. and so laudable an undertaking should suffer damage by an unskilful management.

If any desire to know how so mean and obscure a person as I am, who in learning, judgment, felicity of expression, and all advantages for such a service, am less than the least of all my Master's servants, came to venture upon so great a work, I can give no other account of it but this: It has long been my practice, what little time I had to spare in my study, from my constant preparations for the pulpit, to spend it in drawing up expositions upon some parts of the New Testament, not so much for my own use, as purely for my own entertainment, because I knew not how to employ my thoughts and time more to my satisfaction. Trahit sua quemque voluptas; Every man that studies hath some beloved study, which is his delight above any other, and this is mine. It is that learning which it was my happiness from a child to be trained up in, by my ever honoured father, whose memory must always be very dear and precious to me: he often minded me that a good textuary is a good divine; and that I should read other books with this in my eye, that I might be the better able to understand and apply the Scripture.

While I was thus employing my self, came out Mr. Burkit's exposition of the Gospels first, and afterwards of the Acts and the Epistles, which met with very good acceptance among serious people, and, no doubt by the blessing of God, will continue to do great service to the Church. Soon after he had finished that work it pleased God to call him to his rest; upon which I was urged, by some of my friends, and was my self



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self inclined to attempt the like upon the Old Testament, in the strength of the grace of Christ. This here upon the Pentateuch is humbly offered as a Specimen; if it find favour, and be found any way useful, it is my present purpose, in dependence upon divine aids, to go on, so long as God shall continue my life and health, and as my other work will permit.

Many helps I know we have of this kind in our own language, which we have a great deal of reason to value, and to be very thankful to God for: but the Scripture is a subject that can never be exhausted. *Semper habet aliquid relegendum.* When David had amassed a vast treasure for the building of the temple, yet saith he to Solomon, Thou mayest add thereto, 1 Chron. xxii. 14. such a treasure is Scripture-knowledge, it is still capable of increase, till we all come to the perfect man.

The Scripture is a field or vineyard which finds work for variety of hands, and about which may be employed a great diversity of gifts and operations, but all from the same Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 4. 6. and for the glory of the same Lord. The learned in the languages and in ancient usages have been very serviceable to the church, (the blessed occupant of this field) by their curious and elaborate searches into its various products, their anatomies of its plants, and the entertaining lectures they have read upon them. The philosophy of the criticks hath been of much more advantage to religion, and lent more light to sacred Truth, than the philosophy of the school-divines. The learned also in the arts of war have done great service in defending this garden of the Lord against the violent attacks of the powers of darkness, successfully pleading the cause of the sacred Writings against the spiteful cavils of atheists, deists, and the profane scoffers of these later days. Such as these stand in the posts of honour, and their praise is in all the churches; yet the labours of the vinedressers and the husbandmen, though they are the poor of the land who till this ground, and gather in the fruits of it, are no less necessary in their place, and beneficial to the household of God, that out of these precious fruits every one may have his portion of meat in due season. These are the labours which, according to my ability, I have here set my hand unto. And as the plain and practical expositors would not, for a world, say of the learned criticks, There is no need of them, so it is hoped those eyes and heads will not say to the hands and feet, There is no need of you. 1 Cor. xii. 21.

The learned have of late received very great advantage in their searches into this part of holy Writ, and the books that follow, (and still hope for more) by the excellent and most valuable labours of that great and good man bishop Patrick, whom, for vast reading, solid judgment, and a most happy application to these best of studies, even in his advanced years, and honours, succeeding ages, no doubt, will rank among the first three of commentators, and bless God for him.

Mr. Pool's English annotations (which having had so many impressions we may suppose got into most hands) are of admirable use, especially for the explaining of scripture phrases, opening the sense, referring to parallel Scriptures, and the clearing of difficulties that occur, I have therefore all along been brief upon that which is there most largely discussed, and have industriously declined, as much as I could, what is to be found there; for I would not, actum agere, nor (if I may be allowed to borrow the apostle's words) boast of things made ready to our hand. 2 Cor. x. 16.

These and other annotations which are referred to the particular words and clauses they are designed to explain, are most easy to be consulted upon occasion; but the exposition which (like this here) is put into a continued discourse, digested under proper heads, is much more easy and ready to be read through for ones own or others instruction. And, I think, the observing the connection of each chapter, (if there be occasion) with that which goes before, and the general scope of it, with the thread of the history or discourse, and the collecting the several parts of it to be seen at one view, will contribute very much to the understanding of it, and will give the mind abundant satisfaction in the general intention, though there may be here and there a difficult word or expression which the best criticks cannot easily account for. This therefore I have here endeavoured.

But we are concerned not only to understand what we read, but to improve it to some good purpose, and in order thereunto to be affected with it, and to receive the impressions of it. The Word of God is designed to be not only a light to our eyes, the entertaining subject of our contemplation, but a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths, Psal. cxix. 106. to direct us in the way of our duty, and to prevent our turning aside into any by-way: we must therefore, in searching the Scriptures, enquire, not only, What is this? but, What is this to us? What use may we make of it? How may we accomodate it to some of the purposes of that divine and heavenly life which, by the grace of God, we are resolved to live? Enquiries of this kind I have here aimed to answer.

When the stone is rolled from the well's mouth by a critical explication of the Text, still there are those who would both drink themselves, and water their flocks, but they complain the Well is deep and they have nothing to draw, how then shall they come by this living water? Some such may, perhaps, find a bucket here, or water drawn to their hands; and pleased enough shall I be with this office of the Gibeonites, to draw water for the congregation of the Lord out of these wells of salvation.

That which I aim at in the exposition is, to give what I thought the genuine sense, and to make it as plain as I could to ordinary capacities, not troubling my reader with the different sentiments of expositors; which would have been to transcribe Mr. Pool's Latin Synopsis, where this is done abundantly to our satisfaction and advantage.

As to the practical Observations, I have not obliged myself to raise doctrines out of every verse or paragraph, but only have endeavoured to mix with the exposition such hints or remarks as I thought improveable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, aiming in all to promote practical godliness, and carefully avoiding matters of doubtful disputation and strifes of words. It is only the prevalency of the power of religion in the hearts and lives of Christians that will redress our grievances, and turn our wilderness into a fruitful field.

And



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*And since our Lord Jesus Christ is the true treasure hid in the field of the Old Testament, and was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, I have been careful to observe what Moses wrote of him, to which he himself oft appealed. In the writings of the prophets we meet with more of the plain and express promises of the Messiah, and the grace of the Gospel; but here in the books of Moses we find more of the types, both real and personal, figures of him that was to come; shadows, of which the substance is Christ, Rom. v. 14. Those, to whom to live is Christ, will find in those that which is very instructive and affecting, and will give great assistance to their faith, and love, and holy joy. This, in a particular manner, we search the Scriptures for, to find what they testify of Christ and eternal life. John v. 39.*

*Nor is it any objection against the application of the ceremonial Institutions to Christ and his grace, that they to whom they were given could not discern this sense, or use of them; but it is rather a reason why we should be very thankful that the vail which was upon their minds in the reading of the Old Testament is done away in Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 18. Though they then could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished, it doth not therefore follow but that we who are happily furnished with a key to these mysteries, may in them, as in a glass, behold the glory of the Lord Jesus. And yet, perhaps, the pious Jews saw more of the Gospel in their Ritual, than we think they did; they had at least a general expectation of good things to come, by faith in the promises made to the fathers, as we have of the happiness of heaven, though they could not of that world to come, no more than we can of this, form any distinct or certain idea. Our conceptions of the future state, perhaps, are as dark and confused, as short of the truth, and as wide from it, as theirs then were of the kingdom of the Messiah: but God requires faith only, according to the revelation he gives. They then were accountable for no more light than they had, and we now are accountable for that greater light which we have in the Gospel, by the help of which we may find much more of Christ in the Old Testament than they could.*

*If any think our observations sometimes take rise from that which to them seems too minute, let them remember that maxim of the Rabbins, Non est in lege vel una litera à quâ non pendent magni montes. We are sure there is not an idle word in the Bible.*

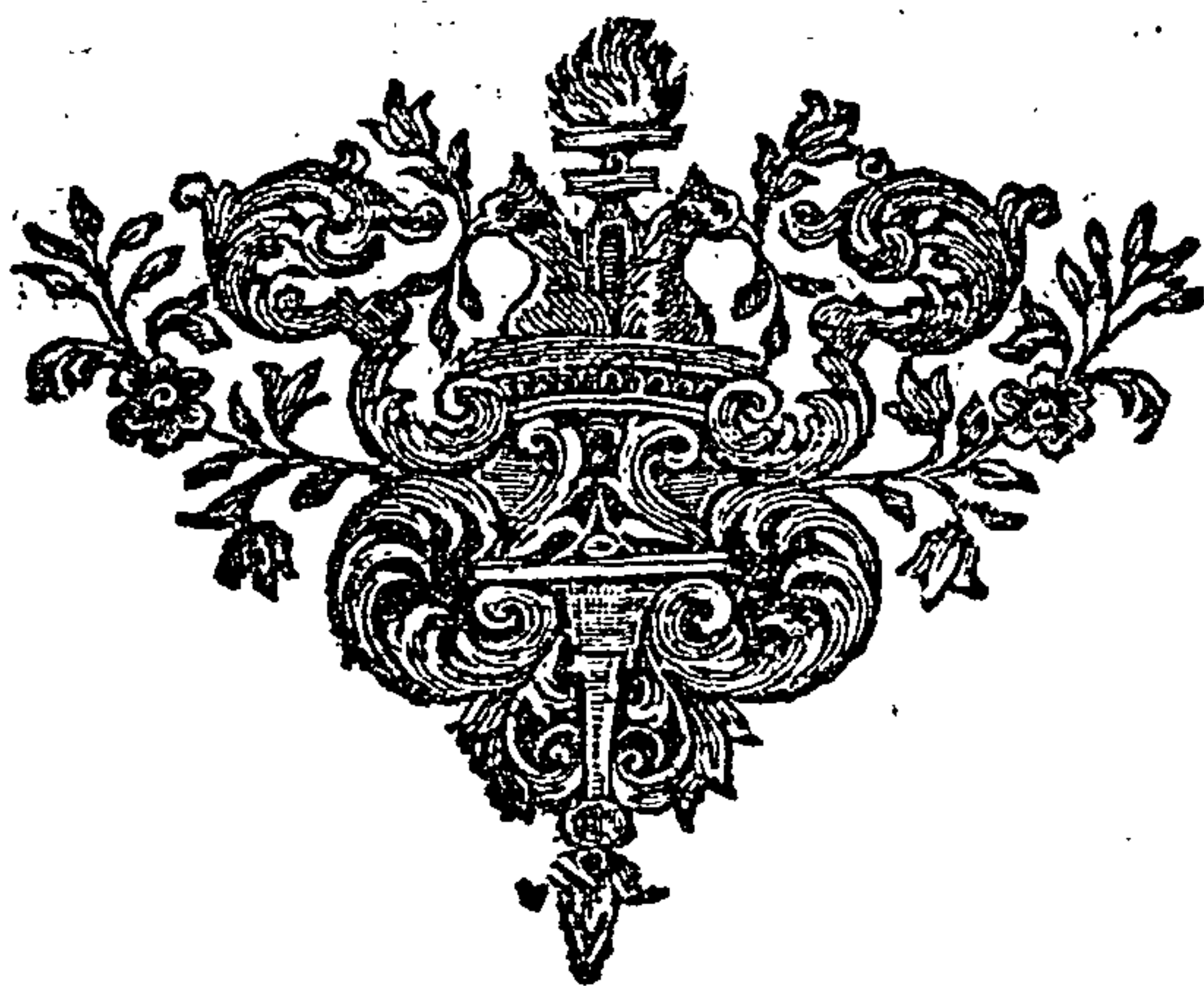
*I would desire the reader not only to read the text intire, before he reads the exposition, but as the several verses are referred to in the exposition, to cast his eye upon them again, and then he will the better understand what he reads. And if he have leisure he will find it of use to him to turn to the Scriptures which are sometimes only referred to for brevity sake, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

*It is the declared purpose of the eternal Mind in all the operations, both of providence and grace, to magnify the Law and to make it honourable, Isa. xlii. 21. nay, to magnify his word above all his name, Psal. cxxxviii. 2. so that when we pray, Father, glorify thy Name, we mean this, among other things, Father, magnify the Holy Scriptures; and to that prayer made in faith, we may be sure of that answer which was given to our blessed Saviour when he prayed it, with particular respect to the fulfilling the Scriptures in his own sufferings, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again, John xii. 28. To this great design I humbly desire to be some way serviceable; in the strength of that grace by which I am what I am, hoping that what may help to make the reading of the Scripture more easy, pleasant and profitable, will be graciously accepted by him that smiled on the widow's two mites cast into the treasury, as an intention to magnify it and make it honourable; and if I can but gain that point, in any measure, with some, I shall think my endeavours abundantly recompensed, however, by others, I and my performances may be vilified and made contemptible.*

*I have now nothing more to add, but to recommend my self to the prayers of my friends, and them to the grace of the Lord Jesus, and so rest an unworthy dependant upon that grace, and, through that, an expectant of the glory to be revealed.*

*Chester, Octob.  
2. 1706.*

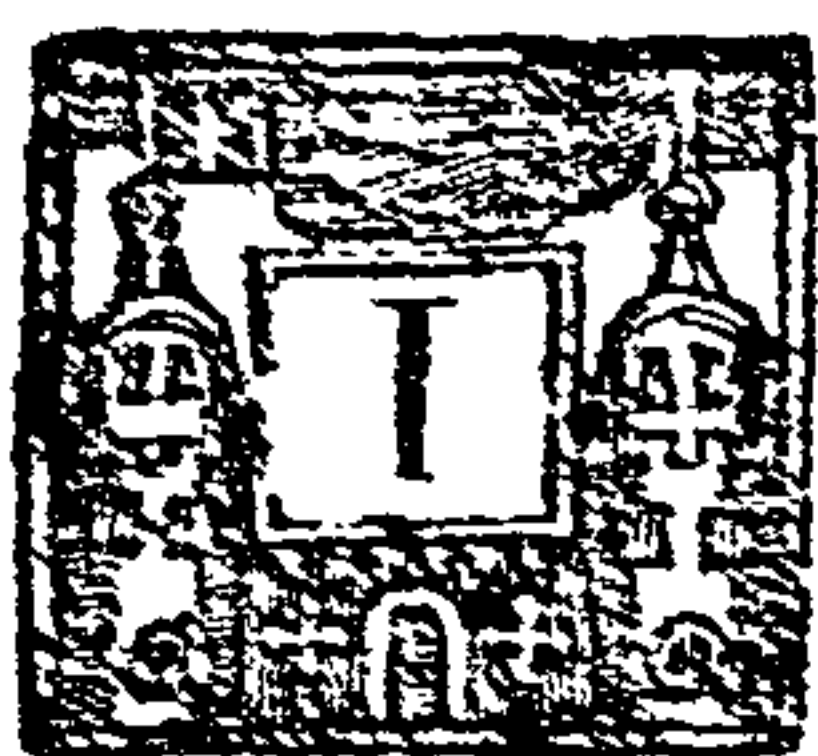
M. H.





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# Epistle to the Reader.



It is not so much our design to recommend this excellent performance, as to tell the world how sensible we are that it can never need our Recommendation : We are fully assured it is able to speak for itself, and, if it were not so, we know very well that our Names and Sentiments can never contribute any authority to it.

We will not take notice of those extrinſick and occasional advantages which give unto books a precarious and ſhort-liv'd reputation, ſuch as the capacity of the generality of readers, the humours of the age, an intire ſubſerviency, or a direct oppoſition to the prevailing intereſts of the places in which we live ; but this is certain, the real intrinſick and abiding value of a work of this nature, muſt ariſe from the excellency of its ſubject, together with the juſt manner in which it is treated.

The ſubject of this Book may, with very good reaſon, challenge the preference to every thing elſe in this world ; it is the firſt volume of the oracles of God, of equal authority with the reſt of the Bible, and of excellent uſe to explain and confirm the other parts of Sacred Writ unto us.

The ſtudy of Antiquity has been always accounted a very profitable and pleaſing thing, and there is no antiquity like unto that which we have in the books of Moſes, other hiſtories are novel and modern, if compared with this ; ſome of them, perhaps, may lead us a thouſand years back, two thouſand is a great way, thoſe that pretend to go higher loſe themſelves, and us too, in the dark and untrodden paths of fancy and conjecture ; but here we have a Book that gives us a certain, rational, ſatisfactory account of the beginning of Time, the creation of the World, the original of Nations, the diviſion of Languages, and, what concerns us moſt to know, the unhappy ſource of all that vanity and vice that have corrupted human nature, and made ſo deplorable a breach betwixt God and man, together with the wonderful counſels and methods of Divine Love, for the recovery of ſinners by the promiſed Seed, ſo directly ſhadowed forth, eſpecially by the typical ſacrifices of the Levitical Law.

It ought to be very grateful to us to conſider how, in giving us the Bible, our gracious God has moſt kindly ſupplied the deficiencies of our perſonal knowledge : we are ſhort-lived and ſhort-ſighted creatures, it is but very little that falls under our own obſervation, but God has put a Book into our hands, by the help whereof, we may ſtretch out our knowledge to a vaſt compaſs ; if we look into the hiſtorical part of it we may go back as far as to the beginning of time ; and if we conſult the prophetical, we may look as far forward as to the end of days, and may take a view from firſt to laſt of all thoſe things in which our duty and happineſs are moſt nearly intereſted.

As to the manner in which the reverend Author has treated this noble ſubject, we only ſay it is worthy of himſelf, that is, of one that from a child has known the Holy Scriptures, that by the example and advice of an excellent Father, by the help of a pious and learned education, has ſearched very narrowly into them, and not only made them the delightful ſubject of his ſolitary hours, but conſtantly allowed them a larger room both in his family devotions and publick miniſtrations. How great and manifeſt advantages have reſulted from hence to himſelf as to his own temper and conduct, and to the happy people amongſt whom he has ſpent ſo much of his life and labours, we muſt not ſay, becauſe we would not offend him, but leave it to the impartial thoughts of all thoſe that will be ſo kind to themſelves, as to accept of the aſſiſtance that is here offered unto them.

We cannot conclude without expreſſing our hearts deſire and prayer to God, that our dear and honoured brother may live to ſee the good ſucceſs of this part of his work, and may have the opportunity to purſue and perfect all his further deſigns of this nature.

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*John Shower.*

*William Tong.*



A N

# E X P O S I T I O N,

W I T H

## P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S,

Upon the First Book of Moses called

# G E N E S I S.

*We have now before us, 1. The Holy Bible, or Book, for so Bible signifies. We call it the Book by way of eminency, for it is incomparably the best book that ever was written, the Book of Books, shining like the sun in the firmament of learning; other valuable and useful books, like the moon and stars, borrowing their light from it. We call it the Holy Book, because it was written by holy men, indited by the Holy Ghost, it is perfectly pure from all falsehood, and corrupt intention, and the manifest tendency of it is to promote holiness among men. — The great things of God's Law and Gospel are here written to us, that they might be reduced to a greater certainty, might spread further, remain longer, and be transmitted to distant places and ages more pure and entire than possibly they could be by report and tradition. And we shall have a great deal to answer for if these things which belong to our peace; being thus committed to us, in black and white, be neglected by us as a strange and foreign thing, Hos. viii. 12. — The Scriptures, or Writings of the several inspired penmen, from Moses down to St John, in which divine light, like that of the morning, shone gradually, (the sacred Canon being now compleated) are all put together in this blessed Bible, which, thanks be to God, we have in our hands, and they make as perfect a day, as we are to expect on this side Heaven. Every part was good, but all together very good. This is the light that shines in a dark place; 2 Pet. i. 19. and a dark place indeed, the world would be without the Bible. — 2. We have before us that part of the Bible which we call the Old Testament, containing the acts and monuments of the church from the creation, almost to the coming of Christ in the flesh, which was about four thousand years; the truths then revealed, the laws then enacted, the devotions then paid, the prophecies then given, and the events that were concerning that distinguished body, so far as God saw fit to preserve to us the knowledge of them. This is called a Testament, or Covenant, (Διαθήκη) because it was a settled declaration of the will of God concerning man in a federal way, and had it's force from the designed death of the great Testator, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8. — It is called the Old Testament with relation to the New which doth not cancel and supersede it, but crown and perfect it, by the bringing in of that better hope which was typified and foretold in it; the Old Testament still remains glorious, tho' the New far exceeds in glory, 2 Cor. iii. 9. — 3. We have before us that part of the Old Testament which we call the Pentateuch, or five Books of Moses that servant of the Lord, who excelled all the other prophets, and typified the great prophet. In our Saviour's distribution of the books of the Old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, or Hagiographa, these are the Law; for they contain not only the laws given to Israel in the four last, but the laws given to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham in the first. These five books were, for ought we know, the first that ever were written; for we have not the least mention of any writing in all the books of Genesis, nor till God bid Moses write, Exod. xvii. 14. and some think Moses himself never learned to write till God set him his copy in the writing of the Ten Commandments upon the tables of stone. However we are sure these books are the most antient writings now extant, and therefore best able to give us a satisfactory account of the most antient things. — 4. We have before us the first and longest of those five books, which we call Genesis, written, some think, when Moses was in Midian, for the instruction and comfort of his suffering brethren in Egypt; I rather think he wrote it in the wilderness, after he had been in the mount with God, where probably he received full and particular instructions for the writing of it. And as he framed the tabernacle, so he did the more excellent and durable fabric of this book, exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the mount; into which it is better to resolve the certainty of the things herein contained, than into any tradition which possibly might be handed down from Adam to Methuselah, from him to Shem, from him to Abraham, and so to the family of Jacob. — Genesis is a name borrowed from the Greek: It signifies the original, or generation; fitly is this book so called, for it is a history of originals; the creation of the world, the entrance of sin and death into it, the invention of arts, the rise of nations, and especially the planting of the church, and the state of it in it's early days. It is also a history of generations, the generations of Adam, Noah, Abraham, &c. not endless but useful genealogies. — The beginning of the New Testament is called Genesis too, Mat. i. 1. Βίβλος γενέσεως, The Book of the Genesis or Generation of Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for that Book which shews us our remedy, as this opens our wound. Lord, open our eyes that we may see the wondrous things both of thy Law and Gospel!*



## C H A P. I.

*The foundation of all religion being laid in our relation to God as our creator, it was fit that that book of divine revelations, which was intended to be the guide, support, and rule of religion in the world, should begin, as it doth, with a plain and full account of the creation of the world; in answer to that first enquiry of a good conscience, Where is God my maker? Job xxxv. 8. Concerning this, the pagan philosophers wretchedly blundered, and became vain in their imaginations, some asserting the world's eternity and self-existence; others ascribing it to a fortuitous concurrence of atoms; thus the world by wisdom knew not God, but took a great deal of pains to lose him: The holy scripture therefore designing by revealed religion to maintain and improve natural religion, to repair the decays of it, and supply the defects of it, since the fall, for the reviving of the precepts of the law of nature, lays down at first this principle of the unclouded light of nature; that this world was in the beginning of time; created by a Being of infinite wisdom, and power, who was himself before all time, and all worlds. The entrance into God's word gives this light, Psal. cxix. 130. The first verse of the Bible gives us a surer and better, a more satisfying and useful, knowledge of the origin of the universe, than all the volumes of the philosophers. The lively faith of humble Christians understands this matter better than the elevated fancy of the greatest wits, Heb. xi. 3.*

*We have three things in this chapter, (1.) A general idea given us of the work of creation, ver. 1, 2. (2.) A particular account of the several days work, registered as in a journal distinctly and in order. The creation of the light the first day, ver. 3—5. Of the firmament the second day, ver. 6—8. Of the sea, the earth, and its fruits, the third day, ver. 9—13. Of the lights of heaven the fourth day, ver. 14—19. Of the fish and fowl the fifth day, ver. 20—23. Of the beasts, ver. 24, 25. Of man, ver. 26—28. And food for both the sixth day, ver. 29, 30. (3.) The review and approbation of the whole work, ver. 31.*

**I**N the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2. And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

In these verses we have the work of creation in its epitome, and in its embryo.

1. In its epitome, ver. 1. Where we find to our comfort the first article of our creed, that *God the father almighty is the maker of heaven and earth*, and as such we believe in him. Observe in this verse four things. 1. The effect produced, the heaven and the earth, *i. e.* the world, including the whole frame and furniture of the universe, the *world and all things therein*, Acts xviii. 24. The world is a great house consisting of upper and lower stories, the structure stately and magnificent, uniform, and convenient, and every room well and wisely furnished. It is the visible part of the creation that Moses here designs to account for, therefore he mentions not the creation of angels: but as the earth has not only its surface adorned with grass and flowers, but also its bowels enriched with metals and precious stones, which partake more of its solid nature; and are more valuable, but the creation of them not mentioned here; so the Heavens are not only beautified to our eye with glorious lamps which garnish its outside, of whose creation we here read; but they are within replenished with glorious beings, out of our sight, more celestial, and more surpassing them in worth and excellency, than the gold or sapphires do the hills or the field. In the visible world it is easy to observe, (1.) Great variety, several sorts of beings vastly differing in their nature and constitution from each other. *And how manifold are the works, and all good!* (2.) Great beauty. The azure sky, and verdant earth are charming to the eye of the curious spectator, much more the ornaments of both. How transcendent then must the beauty of the Creator be! (3.) Great exactness and accuracy; so those that with the help of microscopes narrowly look into the works of nature, they appear far more true than any of the works of art. (4.) Great power. It is not a lump of dead and unactive matter, but there is virtue more or less in every creature; the earth itself hath a magnetic power. (5.) Great order, a mutual dependence of being, an exact harmony of motions, and an admirable chain and connection of causes. (6.) Great mystery. There are phenomena in nature which cannot be solved, secrets which cannot be discovered, nor accounted for. But from what we see of heaven and earth we may easily enough infer the eternal power and godhead of the great Creator, and may furnish ourselves with abundant matter for his praise. And let our make and place, as men, mind us of our duty, as Christians, which is always to keep Heaven in our eye, and the earth under our feet.

2. The author and cause of this great work. GOD. The Hebrew word is *Elohim*, which signifies, (1.) The power of God, creative. *El* signifies the strong God; And what less than an almighty strength could bring all things out of nothing?

(2.) The plurality of persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This plural name of God in Hebrew, which speaks of him as many tho' he be one, was to the Gentiles perhaps a favour of death unto death, hardening them in their idolatry, but it is to us a favour of life unto life, confirming our faith in the doctrine of the Trinity, which tho' but darkly intimated in the Old Testament, is clearly revealed in the New. The Son of God, the eternal word and wisdom of the Father, was with him when he made the world, *Prov.* viii. 30. nay, we are often told that the world was made by him, and nothing made without him, *John* i. 3, 10. *Eph.* iii. 9. *Col.* i. 16. *Heb.* i. 2. O what high thoughts should this form in our minds of that great God, whom we draw nigh to in religious worship, and that great Mediator in whose name we draw near.

3. The way and manner how this work was effected. God created, *i. e.* made it out of nothing: there was not any pre-existent matter out of which the world was produced. The fish and fowl were indeed produced out of the waters, and the beasts and man out of the earth; but that earth and those waters were made out of nothing. By the ordinary power of nature, it is impossible that something should be made out of nothing; no artificer can work unless he hath something to work on: But by the almighty power of God, it is not only possible that something should be made of nothing, the God of nature is not subject to the laws of nature, but in the creation; it is impossible it should be otherwise, for nothing is more injurious to the honour of the eternal mind, than the supposition of eternal matter. Thus the excellency of the power is of God, and all the glory is to him.

4. When this work was produced. In the beginning, *i. e.* in the beginning of time, when that clock was first set a-going: time began with the production of those beings that are measured by time. Before the beginning of time there was none but that infinite Being that inhabits eternity. Should we ask why God made the world no sooner, we should but darken counsel by words without knowledge, for how could there be sooner or later in eternity? and he did make it in the beginning of time, according to his eternal counsels before all time. The Jewish rabbins have a saying, that there were seven things which God created before the world, by which they only mean to express the excellency of these things. The Law; Repentance; Paradise; Hell; the Throne of Glory; the House of the Sanctuary; and the name of the Messiah. But to us it is enough to say, *In the beginning was the word*, *John* i. 1.

Let us learn hence, 1. That atheism is folly, and atheists are the greatest fools in nature, for they see there is a world that could not make itself, and yet they will not own there is a God that made it. Doubtless they are without excuse, but the God of this world hath blinded their minds. 2. That God is sovereign lord of all by an uncontested right. If he be the creator, no doubt he is the owner and possessor of heaven and earth. 3. That with God all things are possible, and therefore happy are the people that have him for their God, and whose help and hope stands in his name, *Psal.* cxxi. 2.—cxxxiv. 8. 4. That the God we serve is worthy of, and yet is exalted far above all blessing and praise, *Neh.* ix. 5, 6. If he made the world he needs not our services, nor can be benefited by them, *Acts* xvii. 24, 25; and yet he justly requires them, and deserves our praise, *Rev.* iv. 11. If all be of him, all must be to him.

2. Here is the work of creation in its embryo, *ver.* 2. where we have an account of the first matter, and the first mover. 1. A chaos was the first matter. It is here called the earth, (tho' the earth, properly taken, was not made till the third day, *ver.* 10.) because it did most resemble that which afterwards was called earth, meer earth, destitute of its ornaments, such a heavy unwieldy mass was it; it is also called the deep, both for its vastness, and because the waters which were afterwards separated from the earth were now mixed with it. This mighty bulk of matter was it out of which all bodies, even the firmament, and visible heavens themselves, were afterwards produced, by the power of the Eternal Word. The Creator could have made his work perfect at first, but by this gradual proceeding he would shew what is ordinarily the method of his providence and grace. Observe the description of this chaos. (1.) There was nothing in it desirable to be seen, for it was without form and void. *Tum* and *hux*, *confusion* and *emptiness*; so those words are rendered, *Job.* xxxiv. 11. It was shapeless, it was useless, it was without inhabitants, without ornaments, the shadow or rough draught of things to come, and not the image of the things, *Heb.* x. 1. The earth is almost reduced to the same condition again by the sin of man, under which the creation groans, see *Jer.* iv. 23. *I beheld the earth, and lo it was without form and void.* To those who have their hearts in Heaven, this lower world in comparison with that upper, still appears to be nothing but confusion and emptiness. There is no true beauty to be seen, no satisfying fulness to be enjoyed in this earth, but in God only. (2.) If there had been any thing desirable to be seen, yet there was no light to see it by, for darkness, thick darkness, was upon the face of the deep. God did not create this darkness (as he is said to create the darkness of affliction, *Job.* xiv. 7.) for it was only the want of light, which yet could not be said to be



be wanted till something was made that might be seen by it, nor need the want of it be much complained of, when there was nothing to be seen but confusion and emptiness. If the work of grace in the soul be a new creation, this chaos represents the state of an unregenerate graceless soul: There is disorder, confusion, and every evil work: it is empty of all good, for it is without God: It is dark, it is darkness itself; this is our condition by nature, till almighty grace effects a blessed change. (2.) The Spirit of God was the first mover; he moved upon the face of the waters. When we consider the earth without form and void, methinks it is like the valley full of dead and dry bones, Can those live? Can this confused mass of matter be formed into a beautiful world? Yes, if a spirit of life from God enter into it, *Ezek. xxxvii. 9.* Now there is hope concerning this thing, for the spirit of God begins to work, and if he work, who or what shall hinder? God is said to make the world by his Spirit, *Psal. xxxiii. 6.* *Job xxvi. 13.* and by the same mighty worker, the new creation is effected. He moved upon the face of the deep, as Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child; as the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and hovers over them, to warm and cherish them, *Mat. xxiii. 37.* As the eagle flaps up her nest, and fluttereth over her young, (it is the same word that is here used) *Deut. xxxii. 11.* Learn hence, that God is not only the author of all being, but the fountain of life, and spring of motion. Dead matter would be for ever dead, if he did not quicken it. And this makes it credible to us, that God should raise the dead. That power which brought such a world as this out of confusion, emptiness, and darkness, at the beginning of time; can, at the end of time, bring out vile bodies, out of the grave, though it be a land of darkness as darkness itself, and without any order, *Job x. 22.* and can make them glorious bodies.

3. And God said, let there be light: and there was light. 4. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day.

We have here a further account of the first day's work. In which observe, 1. That the first of all visible beings which God created was light; not that by it he himself might see to work, for the darkness and light are both alike to him, but that by it we might see his works, and his glory in them, and might work our works while it is day. The works of satan and his servants are works of darkness, but he that doth truth, and doth good, cometh to the light, and coveteth it, *that his deeds may be made manifest*, *John iii. 21.* Light is the great beauty and blessing of the universe: like the first-born, it doth, of all visible beings, most resemble its great parent in purity and power, brightness and beneficence; it is of great affinity with a spirit, and is next to it; tho' by it we see other things, and are sure that it is, yet we know not its nature, nor can describe *what it is, or by what way the light is parted*, *Job xxxviii. 19, 24.* By the sight of it let us be led to, and assisted in the believing contemplation of him who is light, infinite and eternal light, *1 John i. 5.* and the father of lights, *Jam. i. 17.* and who dwells in inaccessible light, *1 Tim. vi. 16.* In the new Creation, the first thing wrought in the soul is light: the blessed spirit captivates the will and affections by enlightening the understanding, so coming into the heart by the door, like the good shepherd whose own it is, while sin and satan, like thieves and robbers, climb up some other way. They that by sin were darkness, by grace become light in the Lord. 2. That the light was made by the word of God's power; he said, *let there be light*, he willed and appointed it, and it was done immediately, *there was light*, such a copy as exactly answered the original idea in the eternal mind. O the power of the word of God! He spake and it was done, done really and effectually; and for perpetuity, not in shew only and to serve a present turn, for he commanded and it stood fast; with him it was *dictum, factum*, a word, and a world. The word of God, that is, his will and the good pleasure of it, is quick and powerful. Christ is the word, the essential eternal word, and by him the light was produced, *for in him was light, and he is the true light, the light of the world*, *John i. 9.—ix. 5.* The divine light which shines in sanctified souls is wrought by the power of God, the power of his word, and of the spirit of wisdom and revelation, opening the understanding, scattering the mists of ignorance and mistake, and giving the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, as at first, *God commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, *2 Cor. iv. 6.* Darkness had been perpetually upon the face of fallen man, if the Son of God had not come and given us an understanding, *1 John v. 20.* 3. That the light which God willed, when it was produced he approved of. *God saw the light that it was good.* It was exactly as he designed it, and it was fit to answer the end for which he designed it. It was useful and profitable; the world that now is a palace would have been a dungeon without it: It was amiable and pleasant, *truly light is sweet*, *Eccles. xi. 7.* it *rejoiceth the heart*, *Prov. xv. 30.* What God commands, he will

approve and graciously accept of, and be well pleased with the work of his own hands. That is good indeed which is so in the sight of God, for he sees not as man sees. If the light be good, how good is he that is the fountain of light, from whom we receive it, and to whom we owe all praise for it, and all the services we do by it. 4. That God *divided the light from the darkness*, so put them asunder as that they could never be joined together or reconciled, *for what fellowship has light with darkness?* *2 Cor. vi. 14.* And yet he divided time between them, the day for light, and the night for darkness, in a constant and regular succession each to other. Tho' the darkness was now scattered by the light, yet it was not condemned to a perpetual banishment, but takes its turn with the light, and has its place, because it has its use; for as the light of the morning befriends the business of the day, so the shadows of the evening befriend the repose of the night, and draw the curtains about us that we may sleep the better. See *Job vii. 2.* God has thus divided time between light and darkness, because he would daily mind us, that this is a world of mixtures and changes. In Heaven there is perfect and perpetual light, and no darkness at all; in Hell utter darkness, and no gleam of light, in that world betwixt these two, there is a great gulph fixed, but in this world, they are counterchanged, and we pass daily from one to another; that we may learn to expect the like vicissitudes in the providence of God, peace and trouble, joy and sorrow, and may set the one over against the other, and accommodate ourselves to both, as we do to the light and darkness, bidding both welcome, and making the best of both. 5. That God divided them from each other by distinguishing names. *He called the light day, and the darkness he called night.* He gave them names as Lord of both, *for the day is his, the night also is his*, *Psal. lxxiv. 16.* He is the Lord of time, and will be so till day and night shall come to an end, and the stream of time be swallowed up in the ocean of eternity. Let us acknowledge God in the constant succession of day and night, and consecrate both to his honour, by working for him every day, and resting in him every night, and meditating in his law, day and night. 6. That this was the first day's work, and a good day's work it was, *the evening and the morning were the first day.* The darkness of the evening was before the light of the morning, that it might serve for a foil to it, to set it off, and make it shine the brighter. This was not only the first day of the world, but the first day of the week, I observe it to the honour of that day, because the new world began on the first day of the week, likewise in the resurrection of Christ, as the light of the world, early in the morning. In him the day-spring from on high hath visited the world, and happy are we, for ever happy, if that *Day-star arise in our hearts.*

6. ¶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8. And God called the firmament Heaven: and the evening and the morning were the second day.

We have here an account of the second day's work, the creation of the firmament: in which observe, 1. The command of God concerning it. *Let there be a firmament*, an expansion, so the Hebrew word signifies, like a sheet spread, or a curtain drawn out. This includes all that is visible above the Earth, between it and the third Heavens; the air, its higher, middle, and lower region; the celestial globe, and all the spheres and orbs of light above; it reaches as high as the place where the stars are fixed, for that is called here the *firmament of Heaven*, *ver. 14, 15.* and as low as the place where the birds fly, for that also is called the *firmament of Heaven*, *ver. 20.* when God had made the light, he appointed the air to be the receptacle, and vehicle of its beams, and to be as a medium of communication between the invisible and the visible world; for tho' between Heaven and Earth there is an unconceivable distance, yet there is not an unpassable gulph, as there is between Heaven and Hell. This firmament is not a wall of partition, but a way of intercourse. See *Job xxvi. 7.—xxxvii. 18.* *Psal. civ. 3.* *Amos ix. 6.* 2. The creation of it. Lest it should seem as if God had only commanded it to be done, and some one else had done it, he adds, *and God made the firmament.* What God requires of us, he himself works in us, or it is not done. He that commands faith, holiness, and love, creates them by the power of his grace, going along with his word, that he may have all the praise. *Lord, give what thou commandest, and then command what thou pleasest.* The firmament is said to be the work of God's fingers, *Psal. viii. 3.* Tho' the vastness of its extent speaks it the work of his arm stretched out, yet the admirable fineness of its constitution speaks it like a curious piece of art, the work of his fingers. 3. The use and design of it; *to divide the waters from the waters*, i. e. to distinguish between the waters that are wrapt up in the clouds, and those that cover the sea. The waters in the air, and those in the earth. See the difference between these two carefully observed, *Deut. xi. 10, 11.* where Canaan is upon this account preferred before Egypt, that Egypt was moistened and made



made fruitful with the waters that are under the firmament, but Canaan with waters from above out of the firmament; even the dew of Heaven which *tarrieth not for the sons of men*, Mic. v. 7. God hath in the firmament of his power, chambers, store-chambers, whence he *watereth the earth*, Psal. civ. 13.—lxv. 9, 10. He hath also *treasures, or magazines, of snow and hail, which he hath reserved against the day of battle and war*, Job xxxviii. 22, 23. O what a great God is he who is thus provided for the comfort of all that serve him; and the confusion of all that hate him. It is good having him our friend, and bad having him our enemy. 4. The naming of it. *He called the firmament Heaven*. It is the visible Heaven, the pavement of the holy city; above the firmament God is said to have his throne, Ezek. i. 26. for he has prepared it in the Heavens, the Heavens therefore are said to rule, Dan. iv. 26. *Is not God in the height of Heaven?* Job xxii. 12. Yes he is, and we should be led by the contemplation of the Heavens that are in our eye, to consider, *Our father which is in Heaven*. The height of the Heavens should mind us of God's supremacy, and the infinite distance that is between us and him; the brightness of the Heavens, and their purity should mind us of his glory and majesty, and perfect holiness; the vastness of the Heavens, and their encompassing the earth and influence upon it, should mind us of his immensity and universal providence.

9. ¶ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas: and God saw that it was good. 11. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 13. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

The third day's work is related in these verses, the forming of the sea and the dry land, and the making of the earth fruitful. Hitherto the power of the Creator had been exerted and employed about the upper part of the visible world, the light of Heaven was kindled, and the firmament of Heaven fixed; but now he descends to this lower world, the earth, which was designed for the children of men, designed both for their habitation, and for their maintenance, and here we have an account of the fitting of it for both; the building of their house, and the spreading of their table. Observe, 1. How the earth was prepared to be a habitation for man, by the *gathering of the waters together*, and the making of the *dry land to appear*; thus instead of that confusion which was, *ver. 2.* when earth and water were mixed in one great mass: behold, now there is order, by such a separation as rendered them both useful. God said, *Let it be so, and it was so*; no sooner said but done. (1.) The waters which had covered the earth were ordered to retire, and to *gather into one place*, viz. those hollows which were fitted and appointed for their reception and rest: the waters thus cleared, thus collected, and thus lodged in their proper place, he called seas; for though they are many, in distant regions, and washing several shores, yet, either above ground or under ground, they have communication with each other, and so they are one, and the common receptacle of waters, into which all the rivers run, *Eccles. i. 7.* Waters and seas oft in scripture signify troubles and afflictions, *Psal. lxxix. 2, 14, 15.—xlii. 7.* God's own people are not exempted from these in this world, but it is their comfort that they are only *waters under the Heaven*, there are none in Heaven, and that they are all in the place that God hath appointed them, and within the bounds that he hath set them. How the waters were gathered together at first, and how they are still bound and limited by the same Almighty hand that that first confined them, is elegantly described, *Psal. civ. 6,—9.* and is there mentioned as matter of praise. *They that go down to the sea in ships* ought to acknowledge daily the wisdom, power, and goodness, of the Creator, in making the great waters serviceable to man for trade and commerce; and *they that tarry at home* must own themselves indebted to him that keeps the sea with bars and doors in its decreed place, and stays its proud waves, *Job xxxvi. 10, 11.* (2.) The dry land was made to appear, and emerge out of the waters, and was called Earth, and *given to the children of men*. The earth it seems was in being before; but it was of no use because it was under water: thus many of God's gifts are received in vain, because they are buried; make them to appear, and they become serviceable. We that to this day enjoy the benefit of the dry land, (tho' since this, it was once deluged, and dried again) must own ourselves tenants to, and dependants upon, that God whose hands formed the dry land, *Psal. xcv. 5.* Jon. i. 9.

2. How the earth was furnished for the maintenance and support of man, *ver. 11, 12.* Present provision was now made, by

the immediate products of the upstart earth, which, in obedience to God's command, was no sooner made but it became fruitful, and *brought forth grass* for the cattle, and *herb* for the service of man. Provision was likewise made for time to come, by the perpetuating of the several species of vegetables, which are numerous, various, and all curious, and every one *having its seed in itself after its kind*, that during the continuance of man upon the earth, food might be fetched out of the earth, for his use and benefit. *Lord, what is man that he is thus visited and regarded*; that such care should be taken, and such provision made for the support and preservation of these guilty and obnoxious lives which have been a thousand times forfeited. Observe here, 1. That not only *the earth is the Lord's*, but *the fulness thereof*, and he is the rightful owner and sovereign disposer, not only of it but of all its furniture. The earth was *emptiness*, *ver. 2.* but now by a word's speaking, it is become full of God's riches, and his they are still; *His corn and his wine, his wool and his flax*, Hos. ii. 9. Tho' the use of them be allowed to us, the property still remains in him, and to his service and honour they must be used. 2. That common providence is a continued creation, and in it our *father worketh hitherto*. The earth still remains under the efficacy of this command, to bring forth grass and herbs, and its annual products, tho' being according to the common course of nature they are not standing miracles, yet they are standing instances of the unwearied power, and unexhausted goodness of the world's great maker and master. 3. That tho' God ordinarily makes use of the agency of second causes according to their nature, yet he neither needs them nor is tied to them, for tho' the *precious fruits of the earth* are usually brought forth by the influences of the *sun and moon*, Deut. xxxiii. 14. yet here we find the Earth bearing a great abundance of fruit, probably ripe fruit, before the sun and moon were made. 4. That it is good to provide things necessary before we have occasion to use them: before the beasts and man were made here was grass and herb prepared for them. God thus dealt wisely and graciously with man, let no man then be foolish and unwise for himself. 5. That God must have the glory of all the benefit we receive from the products of the Earth, either for food or physic. It is he that *bears the Heavens, when they bear the earth*, Hos. ii. 21, 22. And if we have through grace an interest in him who is the fountain, when the streams are dried up, and the *fig-tree doth not blossom*, we may rejoice in him.

14. ¶ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. 15. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. 17. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth. 18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

This is the history of the fourth day's work, the creating of the sun, moon, and stars, which are here accounted for, not as they are in themselves, and in their own nature to satisfy the curious, but as they are in relation to this earth, to which they serve as lights, and this is enough to furnish us with matter for praise and thanksgiving. Holy Job mentions this as an instance of the glorious power of God, that *by his spirit he hath garnished the Heavens*, Job xxvi. 13. and here we have an account of that garniture, which is not only so much the beauty of the upper world, but so much the blessing of this lower; for though Heaven be high, yet hath it respect to this earth, and therefore should have respect from it. Of the creation of the lights of Heaven we have an account, 1. In general, *ver. 14, 15.* where we have, (1.) The command given concerning them. *Let there be lights in the firmament of Heaven*. God hath said, *ver. 3.* *Let there be light, and there was light*; but that was as it were a chaos of light, scattered, and confused, now it was collected and modelled, and made into several luminaries, and so rendered both more glorious, and more serviceable. God is the God of order, and not of confusion: and as he is light, so he is the father and former of lights. Those lights were to be *in the firmament of Heaven*, that vast expanse which incloseth the earth, and is conspicuous to all; for no man *when he has lighted a candle* puts it under a bushel, but *on a candlestick*, Luke viii. 16. and a stately golden candlestick the firmament of Heaven is, from which these candles give light to *all that are in the house*. The firmament itself is spoken of, as having a brightness of its own, *Dan. xii. 3.* But that was not sufficient to give light to the Earth; and perhaps for that reason it is not expressly said of the *second day's work*, in which the firmament was made, that it was good, because, till it was adorned with these lights on the fourth day, it was not become serviceable



serviceable to man. (2.) The use they were intended to be of, to this earth. (1.) They must be for the distinction of times; of day and night, summer and winter, which are interchanged by the motion of the sun; whose rising makes day, his setting night, his approach towards our tropick makes summer, his recess to the other, winter: and thus *under the sun* there is a *season to every purpose*, Eccl. iii. 1. (2.) They must be for the direction of actions. They are for signs of the change of weather, that the husbandman may order his affairs with discretion, foreseeing by the face of the sky, when second causes have begun to work, whether it will be fair or foul, Mat. xvi. 2, 3. They do also *give light upon earth* that we may walk, (John xi. 9.) and work (John ix. 4.) *according as the duty of every day requires*. The lights of Heaven do not shine for themselves, nor for the world of spirits above, they need them not, but they shine for us, and for our pleasure and advantage. Lord, what is man that he should be thus regarded! Psal. viii. 3, 4. How ungrateful and inexcusable are we, if, when God hath set up these lights for us to work by, we sleep, or play, or trifle away the time of business, and neglect the great work we were sent into the world about. The lights of Heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their season without fail; but we are set as lights in this world to serve God, and do we in like manner answer the end of our creation? No, we do not, our light doth not shine before God, as his lights shine before us, Matth. v. 14. we burn our master's candles, but do not mind our master's work. 2. In particular, ver. 16, 17, 18. The lights of Heaven are the sun, moon, and stars, and these all are the work of God's hands. 1. The sun is the greatest light of all, one-hundred sixty-six times bigger than the earth, and the most glorious and useful of all the lamps of Heaven; a noble instance of the Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness, and an invaluable blessing to the creatures of this lower world. Let us learn from Psal. xix. 1—6. how to give unto God the glory due to his name, as the maker of the sun. 2. The moon is a lesser light, and yet is here reckoned one of the greater lights, because, tho' in regard of it's magnitude and borrowed light, it is inferior to many of the stars, yet by virtue of it's office as ruler of the night, and in respect of it's usefulness to the earth it is more excellent than they. Those are most valuable that are most serviceable; and they are the greater lights, not that have the best gifts, but that humbly and faithfully do the most good with them. *Whoever will be great among you let him be your minister*, Matth. xx. 26. 3. He made the stars also, which are here spoken of as they appear to vulgar eyes, without distinguishing between the planets and the fixed stars, or accounting for their number, nature, place, magnitude, motions, or influences, for the scriptures were written not to gratify our curiosity, and make us Astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints. Now these lights are said to rule, ver. 16, 18. not that they have a supreme dominion as God has, but they are deputy-governours, rulers under him. Here the lesser light, the moon, is said to rule the night, but Psal. cxxxvi. 9. the stars are mentioned as sharers in that government, the moon and stars to rule by night. No more is meant, but that they *give light*, Jer. xxxi. 35. The best and most honourable way of ruling is by giving light, and doing good: those command respects that live an useful life; and so shine as lights. Learn from all this, 1. The sin and folly of that ancient idolatry, the worshipping of the sun, moon, and stars, which some think took rise, or countenance at least, from some broken traditions in the patriarchal age, concerning the rule and dominion of the lights of Heaven. But the account here given of them plainly shews, that they are both God's creatures, and man's servants, and therefore it is both a great affront to God, and a great reproach to ourselves to make deities of them, and give them divine honours. See Deut. iv. 19. 2. The duty and wisdom of daily worshipping of that God who made all these things, and made them to be that to us which they are. The revolutions of the day and night oblige us to the solemn sacrifice of prayers and praises every morning and evening.

20. And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly about the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 22. And God blessed them, saying, be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Each day hitherto hath produced very noble and excellent beings, which we can never sufficiently admire; but we do not read of the creation of any living creature till the fifth day, which these verses give us an account of. The work of creation not only proceeded gradually from one thing to another, but rose and advanced gradually, from that which was less excellent to that which was more so, teaching us to press towards perfection, and endeavour

that our last works may be our best works: It was on the fifth day that the fish and fowl were created, and both out of the waters; tho' there be one kind of flesh of fishes, and another of birds; yet they were made together, and both out of the waters; for the power of the first cause can produce very different effects from the same second causes.

Observe, 1. The making of the fish and fowl at first, ver. 20; 21. God commanded them to be produced; he said, *Let the waters bring forth abundantly*, not as if the waters had any productive power of their own, but let them be brought into being, the fish in the waters; and the fowl out of them. This command he himself executed, *God created great whales*, &c. Insects; which perhaps are as various and as numerous as any species of animals; and their structure as curious, were part of this day's work, some of them being allied to the fish, and others to the fowl. Mr Boyle (I remember) saith, he admires the Creator's wisdom and power, as much in an ant as in an elephant. Notice is here taken of the various species of fish and fowl, each after their kind; and of the great numbers of both that were produced, for the waters brought forth abundantly; and particular mention of great whales the largest of fishes, whose bulk and strength exceeding that of any other animal, are remarkable proofs of the power and greatness of the Creator. The express notice here taken of the whale above all the rest seems sufficient to determine what animal is meant by the Leviathan, Job xli. 1. The curious formation of the bodies of animals, their different sizes, shapes; and natures, with the admirable powers of the sensitive life with which they are endued, when duly considered, serve not only to silence and shame the objections of atheists and infidels, but to raise high thoughts, and high praises of God in pious and devout souls, Psal. civ. 25, &c.

2. The blessing of them in order to their continuance. Life is a wasting thing, it's strength is not the strength of stones, it is a candle that will burn out, if it be not first blown out; and therefore the wise Creator not only made the individuals; but provided for the propagating of the several species, ver. 22: *God blessed them, saying, be fruitful and multiply*. God will bless his own works, and not forsake them; and *what he doth it shall be for a perpetuity*, Eccl. iii. 14. The power of God's providence preserves all things as at first his creating power produced them: Fruitfulness is the effect of God's blessing, and must be ascribed to it; the multiplying of the fish and fowl from year to year, is still the fruit of this blessing here. Well, let us give to God the glory of the continuance of these creatures to this day for the benefit of man. See Job xii. 7, 8, 9. It is pity that fishing and fowling, recreations innocent in themselves, should ever be abused to divert any from God and their duty, while they are capable of being improved, to lead us to the contemplation of the wisdom, power, and goodness, of him that made all these things, and to engage us to stand in awe of him, as the fish and fowl do of us.

24. ¶ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

We have here the first part of the sixth day's work: The sea was the day before replenished with it's fish, and the air with it's fowl; and this day the beasts of the earth, cattle, and the creeping things that pertain to the earth. Here, as before, (1.) *The Lord gave the word*; he said, *let the earth bring forth*, not as if the earth had any such prolific virtue as to produce these animals, or as if God resigned his creating power to it, but let these creatures now come into being upon the earth, and out of it, in their respective kinds, conformable to the ideas of them in the divine councils concerning their creation. (2.) He also did the work; he made them all after their kind, not only of divers shapes, but of divers natures, manners, food, and fashions. Some to be tame about the house, others to be wild in the fields: some living upon grass and herbs, others upon flesh: some harmless, and others ravenous: some bold and others timorous: some for man's service, and not his sustenance, as the horse; others for his sustenance and not service, as the sheep, others for both as the ox, and some for neither, as the wild beasts. In all which appears the manifold wisdom of the Creator.

26. ¶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. 28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and



subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

We have here the second part of the sixth day's work, the creation of man, which we are in a special manner concerned to take notice of, that we may know our selves. Observe, 1. That man was made last of all the creatures, that it might not be suspected that he had been any way an helper to God in the creation of the world; that question must be for ever humbling and mortifying to him, *where wast thou, or any of thy kind, when I laid the foundations of the earth?* Job xxxviii. 4. yet it was both an honour and a favour to him that he was made last: an honour, for the method of the creation was to advance from that which was less perfect, to that which was more so; and a favour, for it was not fit he should be lodged in the palace designed for him, till it was compleatly fitted up and furnished for his reception. Man as soon as he was made had the whole visible creation before him, both to contemplate, and to take the comfort of. Man was made the same day that the beasts were, because his body was made of the same earth with theirs, and while he is in the body, he inhabits the same earth with them, God grant that by indulging the body, and the desires of it, we do not make our selves like the beasts that perish! 2. That man's creation was a more signal and immediate act of divine wisdom and power than that of the other creatures. The narrative of it is introduced with something of solemnity, and a manifest distinction from the rest: hitherto it had been said, *Let there be light, and let there be a firmament*; or, let the earth or waters bring forth such a thing, but now the word of command is turned into a word of consultation, *let us make man*, for whose sake the rest of the creatures were made: this is a work we must take into our own hands. In the former he speaks as one having authority, in this as one having affection, for his *delights were with the sons of men*, Prov. viii. 31. It should seem as if this were the work which he longed to be at, *q. d.* Having at last settled the preliminaries, let us now apply our selves to the business, *let us make man*. Man was to be a creature different from all that had been hitherto made. Flesh and spirit. Heaven and earth, must be put together in him, and he must be allied to both worlds. And therefore God himself not only undertakes to make, but is pleased so to express himself as if he called a council to consider of the making of him. *Let us make man*. The three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consult about it, and concur in it, because man when he was made was to be dedicated and devoted to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Into that great name we are with good reason baptized, for to that great name we owe our being. Let them rule man who said, *let us make man*.

3. That man was made in God's image, and after his likeness; two words to express the same thing, and making each other the more expressive, image and likeness is the likest image, the nearest resemblance of any of the visible creatures. Man was not made in the likeness of any creature that went before him, but in the likeness of his Creator, yet still between God and man there is an infinite distance. Christ only is the express image of God's person, as the son of his father, having the same nature. It is only some of God's honour that is put upon man, who is God's image only as the shadow in the glass, or the king's impress upon the coin. God's image upon man consists in these three things, (1.) In his nature and constitution, not that of his body, for God has not a body, but that of his soul. This honour indeed God has put upon the body of man, that the word was made flesh, the son of God was clothed with a body like unto ours, and will shortly cloath ours with a glory like unto his. And this we may safely say, that he by whom God made the worlds, not only the great world, but man the little world, formed the human body at the first, according to the platform he designed for himself in the fullness of time. But it is the soul, the great soul of man, that doth especially bear God's image. The soul is a spirit, an intelligent immortal spirit, an influencing active spirit, herein resembling God, the father of spirits, and the soul of the world. *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord*. The soul of man considered in it's three noble faculties, understanding, will, and active power, is perhaps the brightest clearest looking-glass in nature wherein to see God. (2.) In his place and authority. *Let us make man in our image, and let him have dominion*. As he has the government of the inferior creatures, he is as it were God's representative, or vice-roy, upon earth; they are not capable of fearing and serving God, therefore God has appointed them to fear and serve man. Yet his government of himself, by the freedom of his will, has in it more of God's image, than his government of the creatures. (3.) In his purity and rectitude. God's image upon man consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, *Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10*. He was upright, *Ecc. vii. 29*. He had an habitual conformity of all his natural powers to the whole will of God. His understanding saw divine things clearly and truly, and there were no errors or mistakes in his knowledge: his will complied readily and universally with the will of God, without reluctance or resistance: his affections were all regular, and he had no inordinate appetites or passions: his thoughts were easily brought and fixed to the best subjects, and there was no vanity

or ungovernableness in them. All the inferior powers were subject to the dictates and directions of the superior without any mutiny or rebellion. Thus holy, thus happy, were our first parents in having the image of God upon them. And this honour put upon man at first is a good reason why we should not speak ill one of another, *Jam. iii. 9*. nor do ill one to another, *Gen. ix. 6*. and a good reason why we should not debase ourselves to the service of sin, and why we should devote ourselves to God's service. But how art thou fallen, O son of the morning! How is this image of God upon man defaced! How small are the remains of it, and how great the ruins of it! The Lord renew it upon our souls by his sanctifying grace!

4. That man was made male and female, and blessed with the blessing of fruitfulness and increase. God said, *Let us make man*, and immediately it follows, *so God created man*; he performed what he resolved. With us, saying and doing are two things, but they are not so with God. He created him male and female, Adam and Eve; Adam first out of earth, and Eve out of his side, chap. ii. It should seem that of the rest of the creatures God made many couples, but of man, did not he make one? (*Mal. ii. 15*.) tho' he had the residue of the spirit: from whence Christ gathers an argument against divorce, *Matth. xix. 4, 5*. Our first father Adam was confined to one wife, and if he had put her away there was no other for him to marry, which plainly intimated that the bond of marriage is not to be dissolved at pleasure. Angels were not made male and female, for they were not to propagate their kind (*Luk. xx. 34, 35, 36*.) but man was made so, that the nature might be propagated and the race continued. Fires and candles, the luminaries of this lower world, because they waste, and go out, have a power to light more, but it is not so with the lights of heaven, stars do not kindle stars. God made but one male and one female, that all the nations of men might know themselves to be made of one blood, descendants from one common stock, and might thereby be induced to love one another. God having made them capable of transmitting the nature they had received, said to them, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*. Here he gave them, 1. A large inheritance, replenish the earth, that is it that is bestowed upon the children of men. They were made *to dwell upon the face of all the earth*, Acts xvii. 26. That is the place in which God has set man to be the servant of his providence, in the government of the inferior creatures, and as it were the intelligence of this orb; and to be the receiver of God's bounty which other creatures live upon, but do not know it: to be likewise the collector of his praises in this lower world, and to pay them in to the exchequer above, *Psal. cxdv. 10*. And (lastly) to be a probationer for a better state. 2. A numerous lasting family to enjoy this inheritance; pronouncing a blessing upon them, in the virtue of which their posterity should extend to the utmost corners of the Earth, and continue to the utmost period of time. Fruitfulness and increase depends upon the blessing of God, Obed Edom had eight sons, *for the Lord blessed him*, 1 Chron. xxvii. 5. It is owing to this blessing which God commanded at first, that the race of mankind is still in being, and that *as one generation passeth away, another comes*.

5. That God gave to man, when he had made him, a dominion over the inferior creatures, *over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air*, though man provides for neither, he has power over both, much more *over every living thing that moveth upon the earth*, which are more under his care and within his reach. God designed hereby to put an honour upon man, that he might find himself the more strongly obliged to bring honour to his maker. This dominion is very much diminished and lost by the fall, yet God's providence continues so much of it to the children of men, as is necessary to the safety and support of their lives: and God's grace has given to the saints a new and better title to the creature than that which was forfeited by sin, for all is ours if we be Christ's. 1 Cor. iii. 22.

29. ¶ And God said, behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and ever tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

We have here the third part of the sixth day's work, which was not any new creation, but a gracious provision of food for all flesh, *Psal. cxxxvi. 25*. He that made man and beast thus took care to preserve both, *Psal. xxxvi. 6*. Here is, (1.) Food provided for man, ver. 29. Herbs and fruits must be his meat, including corn, and all the products of the earth, these were allowed him, but (it should seem) not flesh till after the flood, *Gen. ix. 3*. And before the earth was deluged, much more before it was cursed for man's sake, it's fruits no doubt were more pleasing to the taste, and more strengthening and nourishing to the body than marrow and fatness, and all the portion of the king's meat is now. See here, 1. That which should make us humble. As we were made out of the earth, so we are maintained out of it. Once indeed, man did eat angel's food, bread from heaven, but they died, *Job. vi.*



*Job. vi. 49.* it was to them but as food out of the earth, *Psal. civ. 14.* There is meat that endures to everlasting life, the Lord evermore give us that. 2. That which should make us thankful. The Lord is for the body, and from him we receive all the supports and comforts of this life; and to him we must give thanks. He gives us all things richly to enjoy not only for necessity, but plenty, dainties, and varieties for ornament and delight. How much are we indebted! How careful should we be as we live upon God's bounty to live to his glory. 3. That which should make us temperate and content with our lot. Though Adam had dominion given him over fish and fowl, yet God confined him in his food to herbs and fruits, and he never complained of it. Though afterwards he coveted forbidden fruit for the sake of the wisdom and knowledge he promised himself from it, yet we never read that he coveted forbidden flesh. If God give us food for our lives, let not us, with murmuring Israel, ask food for our lusts, *Psal. lxxviii. 18.* see *Dan. i. 15.* (2.) Food provided for the beasts, ver. 30. Doth God take care of oxen? Yes certainly, he provides food convenient for them, and not for oxen only that were used in his sacrifices, and man's service, but even the young lions and the young ravens are the care of his providence, they ask and have their meat from God. Let us give to God the glory of his bounty to the inferior creatures, that are all fed as it were at his table every day. He is a great house-keeper, a very rich and bountiful one, that satisfies the desire of every living thing. Let this encourage God's people to cast their care upon him, and not be solicitous what they shall eat, and what they shall drink. He that provided for Adam without his care; and still provides for all the creatures without their care; will not let those that trust him want any good thing, *Matth. vi. 26.* He that feeds his birds will not starve his babes.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

We have here the approbation and conclusion of the whole work of creation. As for God his work is perfect, and if he begin he will also make an end, in providence and grace as well as here in creation. Observe, 1. The review God took of his work, he *saw every thing that he had made.* So he doth still, all the works of his hands are under his eye, he that made all sees all, he that made us sees us, *Psal. cxxxix. 1, 15.* Omniscience cannot be separated from omnipotence. *Known unto God are all his works,* Acts xv. 18. But this here was the eternal mind's solemn reflection upon the copies of it's own wisdom, and the products of it's own power. God hath hereby set us an example of reviewing our works. Having given us a power of reflection, he expects we should use that power, *see our way,* Jer. ii. 23. and *think of it,* *Psal. cxix. 59.* when we have finished a day's work, and are entering upon the rest of the night, we should commune with our own hearts about what we have been doing that day. So likewise when we have finished a week's work, and entering upon the sabbath rest we should thus prepare to meet our God: And when we are finishing our life's work, and are entering upon our rest in the grave, that is a time to bring to remembrance, that we may die repenting, and so take leave of it. 2. The complacency God took in his work. When we come to review our works we find to our shame, that much has been very bad, but when God reviewed his, all was very good. He did not pronounce it good, till he had seen it so, to teach us not to answer a matter before we hear it. The work of creation was a very good work. All that God made was well made, and there was no flaw or defect in it. (1.) It was good. Good, for it is all agreeable to the mind of the Creator, just as he would have it to be; when the transcript came to be compared with the great original, it was found to be exact, no errata in it, not one misplaced stroke. Good, for it answers the end of it's creation, and is fit for the purpose for which it was designed. Good, for it is serviceable to man, whom God had appointed lord of the visible creation. Good, for it is all for God's glory, there is that in the whole visible creation which is a demonstration of God's being and perfections, and which tends to beget in the soul of man a religious regard to him, and veneration of him. (2.) It was very good. Of each day's work (except the second) it was said that it was good, but now it is very good. For, 1. Now man was made, who was the chief of the ways of God, who was designed to be the visible image of the Creator's glory, and the mouth of the creation in his praises. 2. Now all was made, every part was good, but all together very good. The glory and goodness, the beauty and harmony, of God's works, both of providence and grace, as this of creation, will best appear when they are perfected. When the top-stone is brought forth, we shall cry *grace, grace to it,* *Zech. iv. 7.* Therefore judge nothing before the time. 3. The time when this work was concluded. *The evening and the morning were the sixth day.* So that in six days God made the world. We are not to think but that God could have made the world in an instant: He that said, *let there be light and there was light,* could have said, let there be a world, and there would have been a world, *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,* as at the resurrection, *1 Cor. xv. 52.* But he did it in six days, that he might shew himself a free agent, doing his own work, both in his own way, and in his own time;

that his wisdom, power, and goodness might appear to us, and be meditated upon by us, the more distinctly; and that he might set us an example of working six days, and resting the seventh, it is therefore made the reason of the fourth commandment. So much would the sabbath conduce to the keeping up of religion in the world, that God had an eye to it in the timing of his creation. And now as God reviewed his work, let us review our meditations upon it, and we shall find them very lame and defective, and our praises low and flat, let us therefore stir up our selves, and all that is within us to *worship him that made the heaven, earth, and sea, and the fountains of waters,* according to the tenor of the everlasting Gospel which is preached to every nation. *Rev. xiv. 6, 7.* All his works in all places of his dominion do bless him, and therefore *bless thou the Lord, O my soul.*

## C H A P. II.

*This Chapter is an appendix to the history of the creation, more particularly explaining, and enlarging upon that part of history which relates immediately to man, the favourite of this lower world. We have in it, 1. The institution and sanctification of the sabbath which was made for man, and to further his holiness and comfort, ver. 1—5—2. A more particular account of man's creation, as the centre and summary of the whole work, ver. 4—7—3. A description of the garden of Eden, and the placing of man in it under the obligations of a law and covenant, ver. 8—17—4. The creation of the woman, her marriage to the man, and the institution of the ordinance of marriage, ver. 18, ad fin.*

1. **T**HUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work, which God created and made.

We have here, (1.) The settlement of the kingdom of nature, in God's resting from the work of creation, ver. 1, 2. Where observe, 1. That the creatures made both in Heaven and earth, are the hosts, or armies of them, which speaks them numerous, but marshalled, disciplined, and under command. How great is the sum of them! and yet every one knows and keeps his place. God useth them as his hosts for the defence of his people, and the destruction of his enemies, for he is the Lord of hosts, of all these hosts, *Dan. iv. 35.* 2. That the heavens and the earth are finished pieces, and so are all the creatures in them. So perfect is God's work that nothing can be added to it or taken from it, *Ecc. iii. 14.* God that began to build shewed himself well able to finish. 3. That after the end of the first six days, God ceased from all works of creation. He hath so ended his work, as that though in his providence he worketh hitherto, *Job. v. 17.* preserving and governing all the creatures, and particularly forming the spirit of man within him, yet he doth not make any new species of creatures. In miracles he has controlled and over-ruled nature, but never changed it's settled course, nor repealed, or added to any of it's establishments. 4. That the eternal God though infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, yet took a satisfaction in the work of his own hands. He did not rest as one weary, but as one well-pleased with the instances of his own goodness, and the manifestations of his own glory. (2.) The commencement of the kingdom of grace, in the sanctification of the sabbath-day, (3.) He rested on that day, and took a complacency in his creatures, and then sanctified it, and appointed us on that day to rest and take a complacency in the Creator, and his rest is in the fourth commandment made a reason for ours after six days labour. Observe, 1. That the solemn observation of one day in seven as a day of holy rest, and holy work, to God's honour, is the indispensable duty of all those to whom God has revealed his holy sabbaths. 2. That the way of sabbath sanctification is the good old way, *Jer. vi. 16.* Sabbaths are as antient as the world, and I see no reason to doubt that the sabbath being now instituted in innocency, was religiously observed by the people of God throughout the patriarchal age. 3. That the sabbath of the Lord is truly honourable, and we have reason to honour it; honour it for the sake of it's antiquity, it's great author, and the sanctification of the first sabbath by the holy God himself, and in obedience to him by our first parents in innocency. 4. That the sabbath-day is a blessed day, for God blessed it, and that which he blesteth is blessed indeed. God hath put an honour upon it, hath appointed us on that day to bless him, and hath promised on that day to meet us and bless us. 5. That the sabbath-day is a holy day; for God hath sanctified it. He hath separated and distinguished it from the rest of the days of the week, and he hath consecrated it, and set it apart to himself and his own service and honour. Though it is commonly taken for granted, that the Christian sabbath we observe, reckoning from the creation, is not the seventh but the first day of the week, yet being a seventh day, and we in it celebrating the rest of God the Son, and the finishing the work of our redemption, we may and ought to act faith upon this original institution of the sabbath-day, and to com-

memorate



memorate the work of creation, to the honour of the great Creator, who is therefore worthy to receive on that day blessing, and honour, and praise, from all religious assemblies.

4. ¶ These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created; in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens. 5. And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field, before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. 6. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. 7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

In these verses, 1. Here is a name given to the Creator, which we have not yet met with, and that is Jehovah; the LORD in capital letters, which is constantly used in our English translation to intimate that in the original it is Jehovah. All along in the first chapter he was called Elohim, a God of power, but now Jehovah Elohim, a God of power and perfection, a finishing God. As we find him known by his name Jehovah, when he appeared to perform what he had promised, *Exod. vi. 3.* so now we have him known by that name, when he had perfected what he had begun. Jehovah is that great and incommunicable name of God, which speaks his having his being of himself, and his giving his being to all things; fitly therefore is he called by that name now Heaven and earth were finished. 2. Further notice taken of the production of plants and herbs, because they were made and appointed to be food for man, ver. 5, 6. where observe, (1.) The earth did not bring forth its fruits of itself by any innate virtue of its own, but purely by the almighty power of God, which formed every plant and every herb, before it grew in the earth. Thus grace in the soul, that plant of renown, grows not of itself in nature's soil, but is the work of God's own hands. (2.) Rain also is the gift of God, it came not till the Lord God caused it to rain. If rain be wanted it is God that withholds it; if rain come plentifully in its season, it is God that sends it; if it comes in a distinguishing way, it is God that *caused it to rain upon one city and not upon another*, *Amos iv. 7.* (3.) Though God ordinarily works by means, yet he is not tied to them, but when he pleases he can do his own work without them. As the plants were produced before the sun was made, so they were before there was either rain to water the earth, or man to till it. Therefore though we must not tempt God in the neglect of means, yet we must trust God in the want of means. (4.) Some way or other God will take care to water the plants that are of his own planting. Though as yet there was no rain, God made a mist equivalent to a shower, and with it *watered the whole face of the ground*. Thus he chose to fulfil his purpose by the weakest means, *that the excellency of the power may be of God*. Divine grace descends like a mist, or silent dew, and waters the church without noise, *Deut. xxxii. 2.* 3. A more particular account of the creation of man, ver. 7. Man is a little world consisting of heaven and earth, soul and body, now here we have an account of the original of both, and the putting of both together, let us seriously consider it and say to our Creator's praise, we are *fearfully and wonderfully made*, *Psal. cxxxix. 14.* Elihu in the patriarchal age refers to this history, when he saith, *Job. xxxiii. 6. I also am formed out of the clay*, and ver. 4. *The breath of the Almighty hath given me life*, and ch. xxxii. 8. *There is a spirit in man*. Observe then, 1. The mean original, and yet the curious structure of the body of man. (1.) The matter was despicable. He was made of *the dust of the ground*, a very unlikely thing to make a man of, but the same infinite power that made the world of nothing, made man, its master-piece, of next to nothing. He was made of the dust, the small dust, such as is upon the surface of the earth. Probably not dry dust, but dust moistened with the mist that went up, ver. 6. He was not made of gold dust, powder of pearl, or diamond dust, but common dust, dust of the ground. Hence he is said to be of the earth *χῆνός, dusty*, *1 Cor. xv. 47.* And we also are of the earth, for we are his off-spring, and of the same mold. So near an affinity is there between the earth and our earthly parents, that our mother's womb, out of which we were born, is called the earth, *Psal. cxxxix. 15.* and the earth, in which we must be buried, is called our mother's womb, *Job i. 21.* Our foundation is on the earth, *Job iv. 19.* Our fabrick is earthy, and the fashioning of it like that of an earthen vessel, *Job x. 9.* Our food is out of the earth, *Job xxviii. 5.* Our familiarity is with the earth, *Job xvii. 14.* Our fathers are in the earth, and our own final tendency is to it; and what have we to be proud of then? *Isa. li. 1.* (2.) Yet the Maker was great, and the make fine. The Lord God, the great fountain of being and power, formed man. Of the other creatures it is said they were created and made; but of man, that he was formed, which notes a gradual process in the work with great accuracy and exactness. To express the creation of this new thing, he takes a new word; a word (some think) borrowed from the Potter's forming his vessel upon the wheel, for we are the clay, and God the Potter, *Isa. lxiv. 8.*

The body of man is curiously wrought, *Psal. cxxxix. 15, 16. Materiam superabat opus*. Let us present our bodies to God as living sacrifices, *Rom. xii. 1.* as living temples, *1 Cor. vi. 19.* and then these vile bodies shall shortly be new formed like Christ's glorious body, *Phil. iii. 21.* 2. The high original, and yet the admirable serviceableness of the soul of man. (1.) It takes its rise from the breath of heaven, and is produced by it. It was not made of the earth as the body was; it is pity then it should cleave to the earth, and mind earthly things. It came immediately from God, he gave it to be put into the body (*Eccl. xii. 7.*) as afterwards he gave it the tables of stone of his own writing to be put into the ark, and the urim of his own framing to be put into the breast-plate. Hence God is not only the former but the father of spirits. Let the soul, which God hath breathed into us, breathe after him; and let it be for him, since it is from him. Into his hands let us commit our spirits, for from his hands we had them. (2.) It takes its lodging in a house of clay, and is the life and support of it. It is by it that man is a living soul, i. e. a living man, for the soul is the man. The body would be a worthless, useless, loathsome carcass if the soul did not animate it. To God that gave us these souls we must shortly give an account of them, how we have employed them, used them, portioned them, and disposed of them: and if then it be found that we have lost them, though it were to gain the world, we are undone for ever. Since the extraction of the soul is so noble, and its nature and faculties so excellent, let us not be of those fools that despise their own souls, by preferring their bodies before them, *Prov. xv. 32.* When our Lord Jesus anointed the blind man's eyes with clay, perhaps he intimated, that it was he who at first formed man out of the clay: and when he *breathed on his disciples, saying, receive ye the Holy Ghost*, he intimated, that it was he that first breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. He that made the soul is alone able to new-make it.

8. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. 10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 11. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12. And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx-stone. 13. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 14. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. 15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.

Man consisting of body and soul, a body made out of the earth, and a rational immortal soul the breath of heaven, we have in these verses the provision that was made for the happiness of both, he that made him, took care to make him happy, if he could but have kept himself so, and known when he was well. That part of man, by which he is allied to the world of sense was made happy, for he was put in the paradise of God; that part by which he is allied to the world of spirits was well provided for, for he was taken into covenant with God. Lord what is man that he should be thus dignified? Man that is a worm! Here we have,

1. A description of the garden of Eden, which was intended for the mansion and demesne of this great lord, the palace of this prince. The inspired penman, in this history, writing for the Jews first, and calculating his narratives for the infant state of the church, describes things by their outward sensible appearances, and leaves us by further discoveries of the divine light to be led into the understanding of the mysteries couched under them; spiritual things were strong meat, which they could not yet bear, but he writes to them as unto carnal, *1 Cor. iii. 1.* Therefore he doth not so much insist upon the happiness of Adam's mind, as upon that of his outward estate. The Mosaic history, as well as the Mosaic law, has rather the patterns of heavenly things, than the heavenly things themselves, *Heb. ix. 23.* Observe, (1.) The place appointed for Adam's residence was a garden; not an ivory house, or a palace overlaid with gold, but a garden, furnished and adorned by nature, not by art. What little reason have men to be proud of stately and magnificent buildings, when it was the happiness of man in innocency that he needed none; as clothes came in with sin, so did houses. The heaven was the roof of Adam's house, and never was any roof so curiously ceiled and painted: The earth was his floor, and never was any floor so richly inlaid: the shadow of the trees was his retirement, under them were his dining rooms, his lodging rooms, and never were any rooms so finely hung as these; Solomon's in all their glory were not arrayed like them. The better we can accommodate ourselves to plain things, and the less we indulge ourselves with those artificial



artificial delights, which have been invented to gratify mens pride and luxury, the nearer we approach to a state of innocency. Nature is content with a little, and that which is most natural, grace with less, but lust with nothing. (2.) The contrivance and furniture of this garden was the immediate work of God's wisdom and power. The Lord God planted this garden, *i. e.* he had planted it, upon the third day when the fruits of the earth were made. We may well suppose it to be the most accomplished place for pleasure and delight that ever the sun saw, when the all-sufficient God himself designed it to be the present happiness of his beloved creature, man, in innocency, and a type and figure of the happiness of the chosen remnant in glory. No delights can be agreeable or satisfying to a soul, but those that God himself has provided and appointed for it; no true paradise but of God's planting; the light of our own fires, and the sparks of our own kindling will soon leave us in the dark, *Isa.* l. 11. The whole earth was now a paradise compared with what it is since the fall, and since the flood; the finest gardens in the world are a wilderness compared with what the whole face of the ground was before it was cursed for man's sake; yet that was not enough, God planted a garden for Adam. God's chosen ones shall have distinguishing favours shewed them. (3.) The situation of this garden was extremely sweet; it was in Eden, which signifies delight and pleasure. The place is here particularly pointed out by such marks and bounds as were sufficient (I suppose) when Moses wrote, to specify the place to those who knew that country; but now it seems the curious cannot satisfy themselves concerning it. Let it be our care to make sure a place in the heavenly paradise, and then we need not perplex ourselves with a search after the place of the earthly paradise. It is certain wherever it was, it had all desirable conveniences, and (which never any house or garden on earth was) without any inconvenience; beautiful for situation, the joy and glory of the whole earth was this garden: doubtless it was earth in it's highest perfection. 4. The trees wherewith this garden was planted. (1.) It had all the best and choicest trees in common with the rest of the ground. It was beautified and adorned with every tree that for it's height or breadth, it's make or colour, it's leaf or flower was pleasant to the sight, and charmed the eye; it was replenished and enriched with every tree that yielded fruit grateful to the taste, and useful to the body, and so good for food. God, as a tender father, consulted not only Adam's profit but his pleasure, for there is a pleasure consistent with innocency, nay, there is a true and transcendent pleasure in innocency. God delights in the prosperity of his servants, and would have them easy; it is long of themselves if they be uneasy. When providence puts us into an Eden of plenty and pleasure, we ought to *serve him with joyfulness, and gladness of heart* in the abundance of the good things he gives us. But, (2.) it had two extraordinary trees peculiar to it self, on earth there were not their like. 1. There was the *tree of life in the midst of the garden*, which was not so much a memorandum to him of the fountain and author of his life, nor perhaps any natural means to preserve or prolong life, but it was chiefly intended to be a sign and seal to Adam, assuring him of the continuance of life and happiness, even to immortality and everlasting bliss, through the grace and favour of his maker, upon condition of his perseverance in this state of innocency and obedience. Of this he might eat and live. Christ is now to us the tree of life, *Rev.* ii. 7.—xxii. 2. and the *bread of life*, *John* vi. 48, 53. 2. There was the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, so called, not because it had any virtue in it to beget or increase useful knowledge, surely then it would not have been forbidden; but, (1.) because there was an express positive revelation of the will of God concerning this tree, so that by it he might know moral good and evil. What is good? It is good not to eat of this tree. What is evil? It is evil to eat of this tree. The distinction between all other moral good and evil was written in the heart of man by nature, but this which resulted from a positive law was written upon this tree. (2.) Because in the event it proved to give Adam an experimental knowledge of good by the loss of it, and of evil by the sense of it. As the covenant of grace hath in it not only *believe and be saved, but also, believe not and be damned*, *Mark* xvi. 16. so the covenant of innocency had in it not only do this and live, which was sealed and confirmed by the tree of life, but fail and die, which he was assured of by this other tree; touch it at your peril, so that in these two trees God set before Adam *good and evil, the blessing and the curse*, *Deut.* xxx. 19. these two trees were as two sacraments. 5. The rivers wherewith this garden was watered, *ver.* 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. These four rivers (or one river branched into four streams) contributed much both to the pleasantness and the fruitfulness of this garden. The land of Sodom is said to be *well watered every where as the garden of the Lord*, *Gen.* xiii. 10. Observe, that which God plants he will take care it shall be watered. The trees of righteousness are set by the rivers, *Psal.* i. 3. In the heavenly paradise there is a river infinitely surpassing these, for it is a river of the water of life, not coming out of Eden, as this here, but proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the lamb, *Rev.* xxii. 1. a river that *makes glad the city of our God*, *Psal.* xlvii. 4. Hiddekel and Euphrates are rivers of Babylon, which we read of elsewhere; by these the captived Jews fate down and *wept when they remembered Sion*, *Psal.* cxxxvii. 1. but methinks they had much more

reason to weep (and so have we) at the remembrance of Eden; Adam's paradise was their prison, such wretched work hath sin made. Of the land of Havilah, it is said, *ver.* 11, 12. *that the gold of that land was good, and that there was bdellium, and the onyx stone*: surely this is mentioned, that the wealth which the land of Havilah boasted of, might be as a foil to that which was the glory of the land of Eden. Havilah had gold and spices and precious stones, but Eden had that which was infinitely better, the tree of life, and communion with God. So we may say of the Africans and Indians, they have the gold, but we have the gospel. The gold of their land is good, but the riches of ours infinitely better.

2. The placing of man in this paradise of delight, *ver.* 15. where observe, 1. How God put him in possession of it. *The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden*; so *ver.* 8. Note here, 1. That man was made out of paradise, for after God had formed him he put him into the garden: he was made of common clay, not of paradise dust. He lived out of Eden before he lived in it, that he might see all the comforts of his paradise state owing to God's free grace. He could not plead a tenant-right to the garden, for he was not born upon the premises, nor had any thing but what he received: all boasting was hereby for ever excluded. 2. The same God that was the author of his being, was the author of his bliss: the same hand that made him a living soul planted the tree of life for him, and settled him by it: he that made us is alone able to make us happy: he that is the former of our bodies, and the father of our spirits: he, and none but he, can effectually provide for the felicity of both. 3. It adds much to the comfort of any condition, if we have plainly seen God going before us, and putting us into it. If we have not forced providence but followed it, and taken the hints of direction it has given us, we may hope to find a paradise there, where otherwise we could not have expected it; see *Psal.* xlvii. 4.—2. How God appointed him business and employment; he put him there, not like Leviathan into the waters, to play therein, but to dress the garden, and to keep it. Paradise itself was not a place of exemption from work. Note here, 1. That we were none of us sent into the world to be idle. He that made us these souls and bodies has given us something to work with, and he that gave us this earth for our habitation has made us something to work on. If either a right extraction, or a great estate, a large dominion, or a perfect innocency, or a genius for pure contemplation, or a small family, could have given a man a writ of ease; Adam had not been set to work, but he that gave us being had given us business, to serve him and our generation, and to work out our salvation; if we do not mind our business, we are unworthy of our being and maintenance. 2. That secular employments will very well consist with a state of innocency, and a life of communion with God. The sons and heirs of heaven, while they are here in this world, have something to do about this earth, which must have it's share of their time and thoughts, and if they do it with an eye to God, they are as truly serving him in it, as when they are upon their knees. 3. That the husbandman's calling is an ancient and honourable calling; it was needful even in paradise. The garden of Eden, though it needed not to be weeded, for thorns and thistles were not yet a nuisance, yet it must be dressed and kept. Nature, even in it's primitive state, left room for the improvements of art and industry. It was a calling fit for a state of innocency, making provision for life, and not for lust; and giving opportunity of admiring the Creator, and acknowledging his providence; while his hands were about his trees, his heart might be with his God. 4. There is a true pleasure in the business which God calls us to, and employs us in; Adam's work was so far from being an alloy, that it was an addition to the pleasures of paradise; he could not have been happy, if he had been idle: it is still a law, he that will not work has no right to eat, 2 *Thess.* iii. 10. *Prov.* xxvii. 23.

3. The command which God gave to man in innocency, and the covenant he then took him into. Hitherto we have seen God, man's powerful Creator, and his bountiful benefactor, now he appears as his ruler and law-giver. God put him into the garden of Eden, not to live as he list there, but to be under government. As we are not allowed to be idle in this world, and to do nothing, so we are not allowed to be willful, and do what we please: when God had given man a dominion over the creatures, he would let him know, that still he himself was under the government of his Creator.

16. And the LORD commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. 17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

Observe here, 1. God's authority over man, as a creature that had reason and freedom of will. The Lord God commanded the man, who stood now as a public person, the father and representative of all mankind, to receive law as he had lately received a nature for himself, and all his. God commanded all the creatures, according to their capacity, the settled



course of nature is a law, *Psal.* cxlviii. 6.—civ. 9. The brute creatures have their respective instincts, but man was made capable of performing reasonable service, and therefore receives not only the command of a Creator, but the command of a prince and master. Though Adam was a very great man; a very good man, and a very happy man; yet the Lord God commanded him, and the command was no disparagement to his greatness, no reproach to his goodness, nor any diminution at all to his happiness. Let us acknowledge God's right to rule us, and our own obligations to be ruled by him; and never allow any will of our own in contradiction to, or competition with, the holy will of God. 2. The particular act of this authority, in prescribing to him what he should do, and upon what terms he should stand with his Creator. Here is, (1.) A confirmation of his present happiness to him, in that grant, *of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat*: this was not only an allowance of liberty to him, in taking the delicious fruits of paradise, as a recompence for his care and pains in dressing and keeping it, (*1 Cor.* ix. 7.—10.) but it was withal an assurance of life to him, immortal life upon his obedience: for the tree of life being put *in the midst of the garden*, ver. 4. as the heart and soul of it, doubtless God had an eye to that, especially in this grant, and therefore when upon his revolt this grant is recalled, no notice is taken of any other tree of the garden as prohibited to him, but only the tree of life, *Gen.* iii. 22. of which it is there said, he might have eaten and live for ever, that is, never died, nor ever lost his happiness. Continue holy as thou art, in conformity to thy Creator's will, and thou shalt continue happy as thou art in the enjoyment of thy Creator's favour, either in this paradise, or in a better. Thus upon condition of perfect personal and perpetual obedience, Adam was sure of paradise to him and his heirs for ever. (2.) A trial of his obedience, upon pain of the forfeiture of all his happiness; but of the other tree, which stood very near the tree of life (for they are both said to be in the midst of the garden) and which was called the *tree of knowledge*, in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, q. d. Know (Adam) that thou art now upon thy good behaviour, thou art put into paradise upon trial, be obedient, be obedient, and thou art made for ever, otherwise thou wilt be as miserable as now thou art happy. Here, 1. Adam is threatened with death in case of disobedience; *dying thou shalt die*, noting a sure and dreadful sentence, as in the former part of this covenant, *eating thou shalt eat*, notes a free and full grant. Observe, (1.) That even Adam, in innocency, was awed with a threatening; fear is one of the handles of the soul, by which it is taken hold of and held. If he then needed this hedge, much more do we now. (2.) The penalty threatned is death, *thou shalt die*, i. e. thou shalt be debarred from the tree of life, and all the good that is signified by it, all the happiness thou hast either in possession or prospect; and thou shalt become liable to death, and all the miseries that preface it and attend it. (3.) This was threatened as the immediate consequent of sin, *In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die*, i. e. thou shalt become mortal and capable of dying, the grant of immortality shall be recalled, and that defence shall depart from thee: thou shalt become obnoxious to death, like a condemned malefactor that is dead in law; only because Adam was to be the root of mankind he was relieved as women with child are. Nay, the harbingers and forerunners of death shall immediately seize thee, and thy life thence forward shall be a dying life: and this surely, it is a settled rule, *the soul that sinneth it shall die*. 2. Adam is tried with a positive law, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Now it was very proper to make trial of his obedience by such a command as this, (1.) Because the reason of it is fetched purely from the will of the law-maker: Adam had in his nature an aversion to that which was evil in it self, and therefore he is tried in a thing which was evil only because it was forbidden; and being in a small thing it was the more fit to prove his obedience by. (2.) Because the restraint of it is laid upon the desires of the flesh and of the mind, which, in the corrupt nature of man, are the two great fountains of sin. This prohibition checked both his appetite towards sensitive delights, and his ambition of curious knowledge; that his body might be ruled by his soul, and his soul by his God.

Thus easy, thus happy was man in his estate of innocency, having all that heart could wish to make him so. How good was God to him? How many favours did he load him with? How easy were the laws he gave him? How kind the covenant he made with him? Yet Man being in honour understood not his own interest, but soon became as beasts that perish.

18. And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him. 19. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field: but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

Here we have, 1. An instance of the Creator's care of man, and his fatherly concern for his comfort, ver. 18. tho' God had let him know that he was a subject, by giving him a command, ver. 16. yet here he lets him know also, for his encouragement in his obedience, that he was a friend, and a favourite, and one whose satisfaction he was tender of. Observe, (1.) How God graciously pitied his solitude, *It is not good that man, this man, should be alone*. Tho' there was an upper world of angels, and a lower world of brutes, and he between them, yet there being none of the same nature and rank of beings with himself, none that he could converse familiarly with, he might be truly said to be alone. Now he that made him knew both him, and what was good for him, better than he did himself, and he said, it is not good, that he should continue thus alone. (1.) It is not for his comfort, for man is a sociable creature, it is a pleasure to him to exchange knowledge and affection with those of his own kind, to inform and to be informed, to love and to be beloved; what God here saith of the first man, Solomon saith of all men, *Ecc.* iv. 9, &c. that *two is better than one*, and *wo to him that is alone*: if there were but one man in the world, what a melancholy man must he needs be? Perfect solitude would turn a paradise into a desert, and a palace into a dungeon. Those therefore are foolish who are selfish, and would be placed alone in the earth. (2.) It is not for the increase and continuance of his kind; God could have made a world of men at first to replenish the earth, as he replenished Heaven with a world of angels, but the place would have been too strait for the designed number of men to live together at once, therefore God saw fit to make up that number by a succession of generations, which as God had formed man must be from two, and those male and female, one will be ever one. (2.) How God graciously resolved to provide society for him. The result of this reasoning concerning him was this kind resolution, *I will make a help meet for him*; a help like him, so some read it, one of the same nature, and the same rank of beings. A help near him; so others; one to cohabit with him, and to be always at hand; a help before him, so others; one that he should look upon with pleasure and delight. Note hence, 1. That in our best state in this world we have need of one another's help, for we are members one of another, and *the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee*, *1 Cor.* xii. 21. we must therefore be glad to receive help from others, and give help to others as there is occasion. 2. That it is God only who perfectly knows our wants, and is perfectly able to supply them all, *Phil.* iv. 19. in him alone our help is, and from him are all our helpers. 3. That a suitable wife is a help meet, and is from the Lord: The relation is then likely to be comfortable when meetness directs and determines the choice, and mutual helpfulness is the constant care and endeavour, *1 Cor.* vii. 33, 34. 4. That family society, if that be agreeable, is a redress sufficient for the grievance of solitude: he that has a good God, a good heart, and a good wife to converse with, and yet complains he wants conversation, would not have been easy and content in paradise, for Adam himself had no more: yet even before Eve was created we do not find that he complained of being alone, knowing that he *was not alone for the Father was with him*. Those that are most satisfied in God, and his favour, are in the best way, and in the best frame, to receive the good things of this life, and shall be sure of them, as far as the infinite wisdom sees good. 2. An instance of the creatures subjection to man, and his dominion over them, ver. 19, 20. *every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air God brought to Adam*, either by the ministry of angels, or by a special instinct directing them to come to man as their master, teaching the ox betimes to know his owner. Thus God gave man livery and seisin of that fair estate he had granted him, and put him in possession of his dominion over the creatures. God brought them to him that he might name them, and so might give (1.) a proof of his knowledge, as a creature endued with the faculties both of reason and speech, and so *taught more than the beasts of the earth, and made wiser than the fowls of heaven*, *Job* xxxv. 11. And, (2.) a proof of his power. It is an act of authority to impose names, *Dan.* i. 7. and of subjection to receive them. The inferior creatures did now, as it were, do homage to their prince at his inauguration, and swear fealty and allegiance to him. If Adam had continued faithful to his God, we may suppose the creatures themselves would so well have known and remembered the names Adam now gave them, as to have come at his call at any time, and answered to their names. God gave names to the day and night, to the firmament, to the earth, and sea, and he *calleth the stars by their names*, to shew that he is the supreme lord of these, but he gave Adam leave to name the beasts and fowl, as their subordinate lord, for having made him in his own image he thus put some of his honour upon him.

3. An instance of the creature's insufficiency to be a happiness for man; but among them all, *For Adam there was not found a help meet for him*. Some make these to be the words of Adam himself, observing all the creatures come to him by couples to be named, he thus intimates his desire to his maker, Lord, these have all helps meet for them, but what shall I do, never, never a one for me. It is rather God's judgment upon the review: he brought them altogether to see if there were ever a suitable match for Adam in any of the numerous families of the inferior creatures, but there was none. Observe here, 1. The dignity and excellency of the



the humane nature ; on earth there was not it's like, nor it's peer to be found among all visible creatures ; they were all looked over, but it could not be matched among them all. 2. The vanity of this world and the things of it, put them all together, and they will not make a help meet for man. They will not suit the nature of his soul, nor supply it's needs, nor satisfy it's just desires, nor run parallel with it's never-failing duration. God creates a new thing to be a help meet for man, not so much the woman, as the seed of the woman.

21. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept : and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. 22. And the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh : she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. 24. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife : and they shall be one flesh. 25. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Here we have, 1. The making of the woman, to be a help meet for Adam. This was done upon the sixth day, as was also the placing of Adam in paradise, though it be here mentioned after an account of the seventh day's rest ; but what was said in general, chap. i. 27. that God made man male and female is more distinctly related here. Observe, (1.) That Adam was first formed, then Eve, 1 Tim. ii. 13. and she was made of the man, and for the man, 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. all which are urged there as reasons for the humility, modesty, silence, and submissiveness of that sex in general, and particularly the subjection and reverence which wives owe to their own husbands. Yet man being made last of the creatures as the best, and most excellent of all, Eve's being made after Adam, and out of him, puts an honour upon that sex, as the glory of the man, 1 Cor. xi. 7. If man be the head she is the crown, a crown to her husband, the crown of the visible creation. The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double-refined, one remove further from the earth. (2.) That Adam slept while his wife was in making, that no room might be left to imagine that he had herein directed the spirit of the Lord, or been his counsellor, Isa. xl. 13. He had been made sensible of his want of a meet help, but God having undertaken to provide him one, he doth not afflict himself with any care about it, but lies him down and sleeps sweetly as one that had cast all his care on God, with a cheerful resignation of himself and all his affairs to his maker's will and wisdom : Jehovah-jirah, let the Lord provide when and whom he pleaseth. If we graciously rest in God, God will graciously work for us, and work all for good. (3.) That God caused the sleep to fall on Adam, and made it a deep sleep, that so the opening of his side might be no grievance to him ; while he knows no sin, God will take care he shall feel no pain. When God by his providence doth that to his people which is grievous to flesh and blood, he not only consults their happiness in the issue, but by his grace he can so quiet and compose their spirits as to make them easy under the sharpest operations. (4.) That the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam, not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm, to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved. Adam left a rib, and without any diminution to his strength or comeliness, for doubtless the flesh was closed without a scar, but in lieu thereof he had a help meet for him, which abundantly made up his loss : what God takes away from his people he will one way or other restore with advantage. In this (as in many other things) Adam was a figure of him that was to come : for out of the side of Christ the second Adam, his spouse the church, was formed when he slept the sleep, the deep sleep, of death upon the cross : in order to which, his side was opened, and there came out, blood and water, blood to purchase his church, and water to purify it to himself, see Eph. v. 25, 26.

2. The marriage of the woman to Adam. Marriage is honourable, but this surely was the most honourable marriage that ever was, in which God himself had all along an immediate hand : Marriages (they say) are made in Heaven, we are sure this was, for the man, the woman, the match, were all God's own work : he, by his power, made them both, and now by his ordinance made them one. This was a marriage made in perfect innocence, and so was never any marriage since. (1.) God, as her father, brought the woman to the man, as his second self, and a help meet for him ; when he had made her, he did not leave her to her own dispose, no, she was his child, and she must not marry without his consent. Those are likely to settle to their comfort who by faith and prayer, and a humble dependance upon providence, put themselves under a divine conduct. That wife that is of God's making by special grace, and of God's bringing by special providence is likely to prove a help meet for a man. (2.) From God, as his father, Adam received her, ver. 23. *This is now bone of my bone* ; now I have what I wanted, and which all the creatures could not furnish me with, a help meet for me. God's gifts to us are

to be received with a humble thankful acknowledgement of his wisdom in suiting them to us, and his favour in bestowing them on us. Probably it was revealed to Adam in a vision, when he was asleep, that this lovely creature now presented to him was a piece of himself, and was to be his companion, and the wife of his covenant. Hence some have fetched an argument to prove, that glorified saints in the heavenly paradise shall know one another. Further, in token of his acceptance of her he gave her a name, not peculiar to her, but common to her sex, she shall be called woman, *Isha*, a she-man, differing from man in sex only, not in nature. Made of man, and joined to man.

3. The institution of the ordinance of marriage, and the settling of the law of it, ver. 24. The sabbath and marriage were two ordinances instituted in innocence, the former for the preservation of the church, the latter for the preservation of the world of mankind. It appears by *Matth. xix. 4, 5.* that it was God himself who said, here a man must leave all his relations to cleave to his wife ; but whether he spake it by Moses, the penman, or by Adam who spake, ver. 23. is uncertain ; it should seem they are the words of Adam, in God's name, laying down this law to all his posterity. (1.) See here how great the virtue of a divine ordinance is ; the bonds of it are stronger even than those of nature. To whom can we be more firmly bound than to the fathers that begat us, and the mothers that bare us ; yet the son must quit them to be joined to his wife, and the daughter forget them to cleave to her husband, *Psal. xlv. 11, 12.* (2.) See how necessary it is that children should take their parents consent along with them in their marriage, and how unjust they are to their parents, as well as undutiful, if they marry without it, for they rob them of their right to them, and interest in them, and alienate it to another fraudulently and unnaturally. (3.) See what need there is both of prudence and prayer in the choice of this relation which is so near and so lasting. That had need be well done which is to be done for life. (4.) See how firm the bond of marriage is, not to be divided and weakened by having many wives, *Mal. ii. 15.* nor to be broken or cut off by divorce for any cause, but fornication or voluntary desertion. (5.) See how dear the affection ought to be between husband and wife, such as there is to our own bodies, *Eph. v. 28.* They two are one flesh, let them then be one soul.

4. An Evidence of the purity and innocence of that state wherein our first parents were created, ver. 25. they were both naked, they needed no cloaths for defence against cold or heat, for neither could be injurious to them : they needed none for ornament, Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Nay, they needed none for decency, they were naked, and had no reason to be ashamed. *They knew not what shame was*, so the Chaldee reads it. Blushing is now the colour of virtue, but it was not then the colour of innocence. They that had no sin in their conscience might well have no shame in their faces, tho' they had no cloaths to their backs.

### C H A P. III.

*The story of this chapter is perhaps as sad a story (all things considered) as any we have in all the Bible ; in the foregoing chapters we have had the pleasant view of the holiness and happiness of our first parents, the grace and favour of god, and the peace and beauty of the whole creation, all good, very good : but here the scene is altered. We have here an account of the sin and misery of our first parents, the wrath and curse of God against them, the peace of the creation disturbed, and it's beauty stained and sullied, all bad, very bad, How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed ? O that our hearts were deeply affected with this record ! for we are all nearly concerned in it, let it not be to us as a tale that is told. The general contents of this chapter we have, Rom. v. 12. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned. More particularly we have here, 1. The innocent tempted, ver. 1—5. 2. The tempted transgressing, ver. 6, 7, 8. 3. The transgressors arraigned, ver. 9, 10. 4. Upon their arraignment convicted, ver. 11—13. 5. Upon their conviction sentenced, ver. 14—19. 6. After sentence reprieved, ver. 20, 21. 7. Notwithstanding their reprieve, execution in part done, ver. 22, ad fin. And were it not for the gracious intimations here given of redemption by the promised seed, they, and all their degenerate guilty race, had been left to an endless despair.*

1. **N**OW the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made : and he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden ? 2. And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden : 3. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. 5. For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened : and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.



We have here an account of the temptation wherewith satan assaulted our first parents to draw them to sin, and which proved fatal to them. And here observe,

1. The tempter, and that was the devil in the shape and likeness of a serpent. 1. It is certain it was the devil that beguiled Eve, the devil and satan is the old serpent, *Rev. xii. 9.* a malignant spirit, by creation an angel of light, and an immediate attendant upon God's throne, but by sin become an apostate from his first state, and a rebel against God's and crown and dignity. Multitudes of them fell, but this that attacked our first parents was surely the prince of the devils, the ring-leader in rebellion; no sooner was he a sinner but he was a satan, no sooner a traitor but a tempter, as one enraged against God and his glory, and envious of man and his happiness. He knew he could not destroy man but by debauching him. Balaam could not curse Israel, but he could tempt Israel, *Rev. ii. 14.* The game therefore which satan had to play was to draw our first parents to sin, and so to separate between them and their God. Thus the devil was from the beginning a murderer, and the great mischief-maker. The whole race of mankind had here, as it were, but one neck, and at that satan struck. The adversary and enemy is that wicked one. 2. It was the devil in the likeness of a serpent. Whether it was only the visible shape and appearance of a serpent, as some think those were, of which we read, *Exod. vii. 12.* or whether it was a real living serpent, acted and possessed by the devil is not certain, by God's permission it might be either. The devil chose to act his part in a serpent, (1.) Because it is a specious creature, has a spotted dappled skin, and then went erect. Perhaps it was a flying serpent, which seemed to come from on high, as a messenger from the upper world, one of the seraphim, for the fiery serpents were flying, *Isa. xiv. 29.* Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in gay fine colours that are but skin-deep; and seems to come from above, for satan can seem an angel of light. And (2.) Because it is a subtle creature. That is here taken notice of. Many instances are given of the subtilty of the serpent, both to do mischief and to secure himself in it when it is done; we are bid to be wise as serpents. But this serpent, as acted by the devil, no doubt, was more subtle than any other, for the devil though he has lost the sanctity retains the sagacity of an angel, and is wise to do evil. He knew of more advantage by making use of the serpent than we are aware of. Observe, There is not any thing by which the devil serves himself and his own interest more than by unsanctified subtilty. What Eve thought of this serpent speaking to her we are not likely to tell, when I believe she herself did not know what to think of it: At first perhaps she supposed it might be a good angel, and yet afterwards might suspect something amiss. It is remarkable that the Gentile idolaters did many of them worship the devil in the shape and form of a serpent, thereby avowing their adherence to that apostate spirit, and wearing his colours.

2. The person tempted was the woman, now alone, and at a distance from her husband, but near the forbidden tree. It was the devil's subtilty, (1.) to assault the weaker vessel, with his temptations; though perfect in her kind, yet we may suppose inferior to Adam in knowledge and strength, and presence of mind. Some think Eve received the command not immediately from God, but at second hand, by her husband, and therefore might the easier be persuaded to discredit it. (2.) It was his policy to enter into discourse with her when she was alone. Had she kept close to the side out of which she was lately taken, she had not been so much exposed. There are many temptations to which solitude gives great advantage; but the communion of saints contributes much to their strength and safety. (3.) He took advantage by finding her near the forbidden tree, and probably gazing upon the fruit of it, only to satisfy her curiosity. They that would not eat the forbidden fruit must not come near the forbidden tree. *Avoid it, pass not by it, Prov. iv. 15.* (4.) Satan tempted Eve that by her he might tempt Adam; so he tempted Job by his wife, and Christ by Peter. It is his policy to send temptations by unsuspected hands, and theirs that have most interest in us, and influence upon us.

3. The temptation itself, and the artificial management of it. We are often in scripture told of our danger by the temptations of satan, his devices, *2 Cor. ii. 11.* his depths, *Rev. ii. 24.* his wiles, *Eph. vi. 11.* Now the greatest instances we have of them were in his tempting of the two Adams, here, and *Matth. iv.* in this here he prevailed, but in that he was baffled. What he spake to them, of whom he had no hold by any corruption in them, he speaks in us by our own deceitful hearts, and their carnal reasonings, which makes his assaults on us less discernable, but not less dangerous. That which the devil aimed at was to persuade Eve to eat forbidden fruit, and to do this he took the same method that he doth still. 1. He questions whether it were a sin or no, ver. 1. 2. He denies that there was any danger in it, ver. 4. 3. He suggests much advantage by it, ver. 5. And these are his common topics.

1. He questions whether it were a sin or no, to eat of this tree, and whether really the fruit of it was forbidden, *yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat.* The first word intimated something said before introducing this, and with which it is connected. Perhaps some discourse Eve had with herself which satan took hold of, and grafted this question upon. In the chain of thoughts one thing

strangely brings in another, and perhaps something ill at last. Observe here, (1.) He doth not discover his design at first, but puts a question which seemed innocent enough; I hear a piece of news, pray is it true, hath God forbidden you to eat of this tree. Thus he would begin a discourse, and draw her into a parley. Those that would be safe have need to be suspicious, and shy of talking with the tempter. (2.) He quotes the command fallaciously, as if it were a prohibition not only of that tree, but of all; God hath said, *of every tree ye may eat, except one.* He, by aggravating the exception, endeavours to invalidate the concession, has God said, he shall not eat of every tree. The divine law cannot be reproached unless it be first misrepresented. (3.) He seems to speak it tauntingly, upbraiding the woman with her shyness of meddling with that tree, *q. d.* you are so nice and cautious, and so very precise, because God has said ye shall not eat. The devil as he is a liar, so he is a scoffer from the beginning, and the scoffers of the last days are his children. (4.) That which he aimed at in the first onset was to take off her sense of the obligation of the command. Sure you are mistaken, it cannot be, that God should tie you out from this tree; he would not do so unreasonable a thing. See here, That it is the subtilty of satan to blemish the reputation of the divine law, as uncertain, or unreasonable, and so to draw people to sin; and that it is therefore our wisdom to keep up a firm belief of, and a high respect for, the command of God. Has God said ye shall not lie, nor take his name in vain, nor be drunk, &c. yes, I am sure he hath, and it is well said, and by his grace I will abide by it, whatever the tempter suggests to the contrary.

Now in answer to this question, the woman gives him a plain and full account of the law they were under, ver. 2, 3. Where observe, 1. It was her weakness to enter into discourse with the serpent: she might have perceived by his question that he had no good design, and should therefore have started back with a *get thee behind me, satan, thou art an offence to me.* But her curiosity, and perhaps her surprize to hear a serpent speak, led her into further talk with him. Note, It is a dangerous thing to treat with a temptation, which ought at first to be rejected with disdain and abhorrence. The garrison that sounds a parley is not far from being surrendered. Those that would be kept from harm must keep out of harm's way. See *Prov. xiv. 7—19, 27.* 2. It was her wisdom to take notice of the liberty God had granted them, in answer to his sly insinuation, as if God had put them into paradise only to tantalize them with the sight of fair but forbidden fruits. Yea, faith she, we may eat of the fruit of the trees thanks to our Maker, we have plenty and variety enough allowed us. Note, to prevent our being uneasy at the restraints of religion, it is good often to take a view of the liberties and comforts of it. 3. It was an instance of her resolution, that she adhered to the command, and faithfully repeated it, as of unquestionable certainty, God hath said, I am confident he hath said it, ye shall not eat of the fruit of this tree, and that which she adds, neither shall ye touch it, seems to have been with a good intention, not (as some think) tacitly to reflect upon the command as too strict, touch not, taste not, handle not. But to make a fence about it, we must not eat, therefore we will not touch. It is forbidden in the highest degree, and the authority of the prohibition is sacred to us. 4. She seems a little to waver about the threatening, and is not so particular and faithful in the repetition of that as of the precept. God had said, *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,* all she makes of that is, lest ye die. Note, wavering faith and wavering resolutions give great advantage to the tempter.

2. He denies that there was any danger in it; though it might be the transgressing of a precept, yet it would not be the incurring of a penalty, ver. 4. *Ye shall not surely die.* Ye shall not dying die, so the word is, in direct contradiction to what God had said. Either, (1.) It is not certain that ye shall die, so some. It is not so sure as you are made to believe it is. Thus satan endeavours to shake that which he cannot overthrow, and invalidates the force of divine threatnings by questioning the certainty of them; and when once it is supposed possible that there may be falshood or fallacy in any word of God, a door is then opened to downright infidelity. Satan teaches men first to doubt and then to deny; he makes Sceptics first, and so by degrees makes them Atheists. Or, (2.) It is certain ye shall not die, so others. He avers his contradiction with the same phrase of assurance that God had used in ratifying the threatening. He began to call the precept in question, ver. 1. but finding that the woman adhered to that, he quit- ted that battery, and made his second onset upon the threatening, where he perceived her to waver, for he is quick to spy all advantages, and to attack the wall where it is weakest, *ye shall not surely die.* This was a lie, a downright lie, for, 1. It was contrary to the word of God, which we are sure is true, see *1 John ii. 21, 27.* It was such a lie as gave the lie to God himself. 2. It was contrary to his own knowledge, when he told them there was no danger in disobedience and rebellion, he said that which he knew to be false by woful experience. He had broken the law of his creation, and had found to his cost that he could not prosper in it, and yet he tells our first parents they shall not die. He conceals his own misery, that he might draw them into the like: thus he still deceives sinners into their own ruin. He tells them, though they sin they shall not die, and gains credit rather than God who tells them *the wages of sin is death.* Now hopes



hopes of impunity is a great support to all iniquity, and impenitency in it. *I shall have peace though I go on*, Deut. xxix. 19.

3. He promised them advantage by it, ver. 5. Here he follows his blow, and it was a blow at the root, a fatal blow to the tree we are branches of. He not only would undertake they should be no losers by it, he would be bound to save them harmless; but (if they would be such fools as to venture upon the security of one that was himself become a bankrupt) he undertakes they shall be gainers by it: unspeakable gainers. He could not have persuaded them to run the hazard of ruining themselves if he had not suggested to them a great probability of mending themselves.

1. He insinuates to them the great improvements they would make by eating of this fruit. And he suits the temptation to the pure state they were now in, proposing to them not any carnal pleasures or gratifications, but intellectual delights and satisfactions. These were the baits wherewith he covered his hook. 1. Your eyes shall be opened, you shall have much more of the power and pleasure of contemplation than now you have; you shall fetch a larger compass in your intellectual views, and see further into things than now you do. He speaks as if now they were but dim-sighted, and short-sighted in comparison of what they would be then. 2. You shall be as gods, as Elohim, mighty gods, not only omniscient but omnipotent too: or, you shall be as God himself, equal to him, rivals with him, you shall be sovereigns and no longer subjects; self-sufficient, and no longer depending. A most absurd suggestion! as if it were possible for creatures of yesterday to be like their Creator that was from eternity. 3. You shall know good and evil, *i. e.* every thing that is desirable to be known. To support this part of the temptation he abuseth the name given to this tree, it was intended to teach the practical knowledge of good and evil, that is, of duty and disobedience, and it would prove the experimental knowledge of good and evil, that is, of happiness and misery. And in these senses the name of the tree was a warning to them not to eat of it; but he perverts the sense of it, and wrefts it to their destruction, as if this tree would give them a speculative notional knowledge of the natures, kinds, and originals, of good and evil. And, 4. all this presently, in the day you eat thereof, you will find a sudden and immediate change for the better. Now in all these insinuations he aims to beget in them, (1.) Discontent with their present state, as if it were not so good as it might be, and should be. Note, no condition will of itself bring contentment, unless the mind be brought to it. Adam was not easy, no not in paradise, nor the angels in their first state, *Jude* vi. (2.) Ambition of preferment, as if they were fit to be gods. Satan had ruined himself by desiring to be like the most High, *Isa.* xiv. 14. and therefore seeks to infect our first parents with the same desire, that he might ruin them too.

2. He insinuates to them that God had no good design upon them in forbidding them this fruit. For God doth know how much it will advance you, and therefore in envy and ill will to you he has forbidden it; as if he durst not let them eat of that tree, because then they would know their own strength, and would not continue in an inferior state, but be able to cope with him: or as if he grudged them the honour and happiness which their eating of that tree would prefer them to. Now, 1. This was a great affront to God, and the highest indignity that could be done him; a reproach to his power as if he feared his creatures, and much more a reproach to his goodness, as if he hated the work of his own hands, and would not have those whom he has made to be made happy. Shall the best of men think it strange to be misrepresented and evil spoken of when God himself is so? Satan as he is the accuser of the brethren before God, so he he accuseth God before the brethren: thus he sows discord, and is the father of them that do so. 2. It was a most dangerous snare to our first parents, as it tended to alienate their affections from God, and so to withdraw them from their allegiance to him. Thus still the devil draws people into his interest by suggesting to them hard thoughts of God, and false hopes of benefit, and advantage by sin. Let us therefore in opposition to him always think well of God as the best good, and think ill of sin as the worst of evils: thus let us resist the devil and he will flee from us.

6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. 7. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Here we see what Eve's parley with the tempter ended in; Satan at length gains his point, and the strong hold is taken by his wiles. God tried the obedience of our first parents by forbidding them the tree of knowledge, and Satan doth as it were join issue with God, and in that very thing undertakes to seduce them into a transgression, and here we find how he prevailed, God permitting it for wise and holy ends.

1. We have here the inducements that moved them to transgress. The woman being deceived by the tempter's artful management was ring-leader in the transgression, *1 Tim.* ii. 14. she was first in the fault, and it was the result of her consideration, or rather her inconsideration. 1. She saw no harm in this tree more than in any of the rest. It was said, of all the rest of the fruit-trees wherewith the garden of Eden was planted, that they were *pleasant to the sight, and good for food*, chap. ii. 9. Now in her eye this was like all the rest; it seemed as good for food as any of them, and she saw nothing in the colour of it's fruit that threatened death or danger, it was as pleasant to the sight as any of them, and therefore what hurt could it do them? Why should this be forbidden them rather than any of the rest. Note, when there is thought to be no more harm in forbidden fruit than in other fruit, sin lies at the door and Satan soon carries the day. Nay perhaps it seemed to her to be better for food, more grateful to the taste, and more nourishing to the body than any of the rest, and to her eye it was more pleasant than any. We are often betrayed into snares by an inordinate desire to have our senses gratified. Or, if it had nothing in it more inviting than the rest, yet it was the more coveted because it was prohibited, whether it were so in her or no, we find that in us, that is in our flesh, in our corrupt nature, there dwells a strange spirit of contradiction, and a desire of that which is forbidden, *Nititur in vetitum*. 2. She imagined a greater benefit by this tree than by any of the rest, that it was a tree not only not to be dreaded, but to be desired to make one wise, and therein excelling all the rest of the trees. This she saw, *i. e.* she perceived and understood it by what the devil had said to her; and some think she saw the serpent eat of that tree; and that he told her he thereby had gained the faculties of speech and reason, whence she inferred it's power to make one wise, and was persuaded to think, if it made a brute creature rational, why might it not make a rational creature divine. See here how the affectation of unnecessary knowledge, under the mistaken notion of wisdom, proves hurtful and destructive to many. Our first parents who knew so much did not know this that they knew enough. Christ is a tree to be desired to make one wise, (*Col.* ii. 3. *1 Cor.* i. 30.) let us by faith feed upon him, that we may be wise to salvation. In the heavenly paradise the tree of knowledge will not be a forbidden tree, for there shall we know as we are known, let us therefore long to be there, and in the mean time not exercise ourselves in things too high, or too deep for us, nor covet to be wise above what is written.

2. The steps of the transgression; not steps upward but downward towards the pit, steps that took hold on hell. 1. She saw, she should have turned away her eyes from beholding vanity, but she enters into temptation by looking with pleasure on the forbidden fruit. Observe, That a great deal of sin comes in at the eye. At those windows Satan throws in those fiery darts which pierce and poison the heart. The eye affects the heart with guilt as well as grief. Let us therefore with holy Job make a covenant with our eyes, not to look on that which we are in danger of lusting after, *Prov.* xxiii. 31. *Matth.* v. 28. Let the fear of God be always to us for a covering of the eyes, *Gen.* xx. 16. 2. She took; it was her own act and deed. The devil did not take it and put it into her mouth whether she would or no, but she herself took it. Satan may tempt, but he cannot force, may persuade us to cast ourselves down, but he cannot cast us down; *Matth.* iv. 6. Eve's taking was stealing, like Achan's taking the accursed thing, taking that which she had no right to. Sure she took it with a trembling hand. 3. She did eat; when she looked, perhaps she did not intend to take, or when she took not to eat, but it ended in that. Note, the way of sin is down-hill; a man cannot stop himself when he will: the beginning of it is as the breaking forth of water, to which it is hard to say, hitherto it shall come and no further, therefore it is our wisdom to suppress the first motions of sin, and to leave it off before it be meddled with. *Olyta principii*. 4. She gave also to her husband with her. It is likely he was not with her when she was tempted, surely if he had, he would have interposed to prevent the sin, but he came to her when she had eaten, and was prevailed with by her to eat likewise, for it is easier to learn that which is ill than to teach that which is good. She gave it to him, persuading him with the same arguments, that the serpent had used with her, adding this to all the rest that she herself had eaten of it, and found it so far from being deadly, that it was extremely pleasant and grateful, stolen waters are sweet. She gave it to him under colour of kindness, she would not eat these delicious morsels alone; but really it was the greatest diskindness she could do him. Or perhaps she gave it to him that if it should prove hurtful, he might share with her in the misery, which indeed looks ill-natured enough, and yet may without difficulty be supposed to enter into the heart of one that had eaten forbidden fruit. Note, those that have themselves done ill, are commonly willing to draw in others to do the same. As was the devil so was Eve, no sooner a sinner but a tempter. 5. He did eat, overcome by his wife's importunity. It is needless to ask what would have been the consequence if Eve only had transgressed, the wisdom of God we are sure would have decided the difficulty according to equity: but alas, the case was not so; Adam also did eat. And what great harm if he did, say the corrupt and carnal reasonings of a vain mind? What harm? Why, there was in it the unbelief of God's word, and confidence in the devil's;



devil's; discontent with his present state, pride in his own merits, and an ambition of the honour which comes not from God; envy at God's perfections, and indulgence of the appetites of the body; in neglecting the tree of life which he was allowed to eat of, and eating of the tree of knowledge which was forbidden, he plainly shewed a contempt of the favours God had bestowed on him, and a preference given to those God did not see fit for him. He would be both his own carver, and his own master, would have what he pleased, and do what he pleased: his sin was in one word *disobedience*, Rom. v. 19. Disobedience to a plain, easy, and express command, which probably he knew to be a command of trial. He sinned against great knowledge, many mercies, against light and love, the clearest light, and the dearest love that ever sinner sinned against. He had no corrupt nature within him to betray him. But had a freedom of will, not enslaved, and was in full strength not weakened or impaired. He turned aside quickly. Some think he fell the same day he was made; tho' I see not how to reconcile that with God's pronouncing all very good in the close of that day: others, suppose he fell on the sabbath day, the better day, the worse deed; however, it is certain, he kept his integrity but a very little while: being in honour he continued not. But the greatest aggravation of his sin was, that he involved all his posterity in sin and ruin by it. God having told him, that his race should replenish the earth, surely he could not but know that he stood as a publick person, and that his disobedience would be fatal to all his seed; and if so, it was certainly both the greatest treachery, and the greatest cruelty that ever was. The human nature being lodged entirely in our first parents; from henceforward it could not but be transmitted from them under an attainder of guilt, a stain of dishonour, and an hereditary disease of sin and corruption. And can we say then, that Adam's sin had but little harm in it?

3. The immediate consequences of the transgression. Shame and fear seized the criminals, *ipso facto*, these came into the world along with sin, and still attend it. 1. Shame seized them unseen, ver. 7. where observe, 1. The strong convictions they fell under, in their own bosoms; *The eyes of them both were opened*. It is not meant of the eyes of the body, those were open before, by the same token that the sin came in at them; Jonathan's eyes were enlightened by eating forbidden fruit, 1 Sam. xiv. 27. i. e. he was refreshed and revived by it; but theirs were not so. Nor is it meant of any advances made hereby in true knowledge, but the eyes of their consciences were opened; their hearts smote them for what they had done. Now when it was too late they saw the folly of eating forbidden fruit. They saw the happiness they were fallen from, and the misery they were fallen into. They saw a loving God provoked, his grace and favour forfeited, his likeness and image lost, dominion over the creatures gone; they saw their natures corrupted and depraved, felt a disorder in their own spirits, which they had never before been conscious of; they saw a law in their members warring against the law of their minds, and captivating them both to sin and wrath: They saw, as Balaam when *his eyes were opened* (Num. xxii. 31.), the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand, and perhaps they saw the serpent that had abused them insulting over them. The text tells us they saw *that they were naked*, i. e. 1. That they were stripped, deprived of all the honours and joys of their paradise state, and exposed to all the miseries that might justly be expected from an angry God; they were disarmed, their defence was departed from them. 2. That they were, ashamed, for ever shamed before God and angels; they saw themselves disrobed of all their ornaments and ensigns of honour, degraded from their dignity, and disgraced in the highest degree; laid open to the contempt and reproach of Heaven and earth and their own consciences. Now, see here, (1.) What a dishonour and disquietment sin is, it makes mischief wherever it is admitted, sets men against themselves, disturbs their peace, and destroys all their comforts: sooner or later it will have shame, either the shame of true repentance, which ends in glory, or that shame and everlasting contempt to which the wicked shall rise at the great day; sin is a reproach to any people. (2.) What a deceiver satan is, he told our first parents when he tempted them, that their *eyes should be opened*, and so they were, but not as they understood it, they were opened to their shame and grief, not to their honour or advantage. Therefore when he speaks fair believe him not. The most malicious mischievous liars often excuse themselves with this, that they are only equivocations; but God will not so excuse them. 2. The sorry shift they made to palliate these convictions, and to arm themselves against them. They sewed or platted fig-leaves together, and to cover, at least, part of their shame from one another, they made themselves aprons. See here what is commonly the folly of those that have sinned. 1. That they are more solicitous to save their credit before men, than to obtain their pardon from God; they are backward to confess their sin, and very desirous to conceal it, as much as may be; I have sinned, yet honour me. 2. That the excuses men make to cover and extenuate their sins, are vain and frivolous, like the aprons of fig-leaves, they make the matter never the better, but the worse; the shame thus hid becomes the more shameful; yet thus we are all apt to cover our transgression as Adam, Job xxxi. 33. 2. Fear seized them immediately upon their eating the forbidden

fruit, ver. 8. Observe here, (1.) what was the cause and occasion of their fear, they *heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day*. It was at the approach of the judge that put them into a fright, and yet he came in such a manner as made it formidable only to guilty consciences. It is supposed he came in a human shape, and that he who judged the world now, was the same that shall judge the world at the last day, even that man whom God hath ordained; he appeared to them now (it should seem) in no other similitude than that wherein they had seen him when he put them into paradise; for he came to convince and humble them, not to amaze and terrify them. He came in the garden, not descending immediately from Heaven in their view, as afterwards on mount Sinai making either thick darkness his pavilion, or the flaming fire his chariot; but he came in the garden, as one that was still willing to be familiar with them. He came walking, not running, not riding upon the wings of the wind, but walking deliberately as one slow to anger, teaching us when we are never so much provoked, not to be hot or hasty, to speak and act considerately, and not rashly. He came in the cool of the day, not in the night, when all fears are doubly fearful, nor in the heat of the day, for he came not in the heat of his anger; *Fury is not in him*, Isa. xxvii. 4. Nor did he come suddenly upon them, but they heard his voice at some distance, giving them notice of his coming, and probably it was a still small voice, like that in which he came to enquire after Elijah: Some think they heard him discoursing with himself concerning the sin of Adam, and the judgment now to be passed upon him, perhaps, as he did concerning Israel, *Hos. xi. 8, 9. How shall I give thee up?* Or rather, they heard him calling for them, and coming towards them. (2.) What was the effect and evidence of their fear? They *hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God*: A sad change! before they had sinned, if they heard the voice of the Lord God coming towards them, they would have run to meet him, and with a humble joy welcomed his gracious visits, but now it was otherwise, God was become a terror to them, and then no marvel that they were become a terror to themselves, and full of confusion; their own consciences accused them, and set their sin before them in it's colours; their fig-leaves failed them, and would do them no service; God was come forth against them as an enemy, and the whole creation was at war with them; and as yet they knew not of any mediator between them, and an angry God, so that nothing remained but a certain fearful looking for of judgment. In this fright they hid themselves among the bushes: having offended they fled for the same. Knowing themselves guilty, they durst not stand a trial, but absconded and fled from justice. See here, 1. The fallshood of the tempter, and the frauds and the fallacies of his temptations: he promised them they should be safe, but now they cannot so much as think themselves so; he said they should not die, and yet now they are forced to fly for their lives; he promised them they should be advanced, but they see themselves abased, never did they seem so little as now: he promised them they should be knowing, but they see themselves at a loss, and know not so much as where to hide themselves: he promised them they should be as gods, great and bold, and daring, but they are as criminals discovered, trembling, pale, and sneaking: they would not be subjects, and so they are prisoners. 2. The folly of sinners, to think it either possible or desirable to hide themselves from God: can they conceal themselves from the father of lights, *Psal. cxxxix. 7, &c. Jer. xxiii. 24. Will they withdraw themselves from the fountain of life, who alone can give help and happiness?* *Jon. ii. 8.* 3. The fears that attend sin: all that amazing fear of God's appearances, the accusations of conscience, the approaches of trouble, the assaults of inferior creatures, and the arrests of death, which is common among men, is the effect of sin. Adam and Eve that were partners in the sin, were sharers in the shame and fear that attended it; and tho' hand joined in hand (hands so lately joined in marriage) yet could they not animate or fortify one another: miserable comforters they were become to each other.

9. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said, unto him, Where art thou? 10. And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

We have here the arraignment of these deserters before the righteous judge of Heaven and earth, who, though he is not tied to observe formalities, yet proceeds against them with all possible fairness, that he may be justified when he speaks. Observe here, 1. The startling question wherewith God pursued Adam, and arrested him, *Where art thou?* Not as if God did not know where he was, but thus he would enter the process against him. Come, where is this foolish man? Some make it a bemoaning question, poor Adam, what is become of thee? Alas for thee! so some read it. *How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning?* Thou that wast my friend and favourite whom I had done so much for, and would have done so much more, hast thou now forsaken me and ruined thyself? Is it come to this? It is rather an upbraiding question in order to his conviction and humiliation. *Where art thou?* Not in what place, but in what condition? Is this all thou hast gotten by eating forbidden fruit? Thou that wouldst vye with



with me, dost thou now fly from me? Note, those who by sin have gone astray from God, should seriously consider where they are; they are afar off from all good, in the midst of their enemies, in bondage to satan, and in the high rode to utter ruin. This enquiry after Adam may be looked upon as a gracious pursuit in kindness to him, and in order to his recovery: if God had not called to him to reduce him, his condition had been as desperate as that of fallen angels; this lost sheep had wandered endlessly, if the good shepherd had not sought after him, to bring him back, and in order to that, minded him where he was, where he should not be, and where he could not be either happy or easy. Note, If sinners will but consider where they are, they will not rest till they return to God. 2. The trembling answer which Adam gave to this question, ver. 10. *I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid*; he doth not own his guilt, and yet in effect confesseth it by owning his shame and fear, but it is the common fault and folly of those that have done an ill thing when they are questioned about it, to acknowledge no more than what is manifest, and they cannot deny. Adam was afraid because he was naked, not only unarmed, and therefore afraid to contend with God, but unclothed and therefore afraid so much as to appear before him: We have reason to be afraid of approaching to God, if we be not clothed and fenced with the righteousness of Christ, for nothing but that will be armour of proof, and cover the shame of our nakedness: Let us therefore *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and then draw near with humble boldness.

11. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12. And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? and the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

We have here the offenders found guilty by their own confession, and yet endeavouring to excuse and extenuate their fault; they could not confess and justify what they had done, but they confess and palliate it. Observe, 1. How their confession was extorted from them, God put it to the man, ver. 11. *Who told thee that thou wast naked?* i. e. How camest thou to be sensible of thy nakedness as thy shame? *Hast thou eaten of the forbidden tree?* Note, Though God knows all our sins, yet he will know them from us, and requires from us an ingenuous confession of them, not that he may be informed but that we may be humbled. In this examination God reminds him of the command he had given him, I commanded thee not to eat of it, I thy maker, I thy master, I thy benefactor, I commanded thee to the contrary: sin appears most plain and most sinful in the glass of the commandment; therefore God here sets it before Adam; and in it we should see our faces. The question put to the woman was, ver. 13. *What is this that thou hast done?* Wilt thou also own thy fault, and make confession of it? And wilt thou see what an ill thing it was? Note, It concerns those who have eaten forbidden fruit themselves, and especially those that have enticed others to it, likewise seriously to consider what they had done. In eating forbidden fruit we have offended a great and gracious God, broken a just and righteous law, violated a sacred and most solemn covenant, wronged our own precious souls by forfeiting God's favour, and exposing ourselves to his wrath and curse; in enticing others to it we do the devil's work, make our selves guilty of other mens sins, and accessory to their ruin: *What is this that we have done?* 2. How their crime was extenuated by them in their confession. It was to no purpose to plead, not guilty; the shew of their countenances testified against them, therefore they become their own accusers, I did eat, saith the man, and so did I, saith the woman, for when God judges he will overcome; but these do not look like penitent confessions, for instead of aggravating the sin, and taking shame to themselves, they excuse the sin, and lay the shame and blame on others.

1. Adam lays all the blame upon his wife: she gave me of the tree, and pressed me to eat of it, which I did only to oblige her; a frivolous excuse. He ought to have taught her, not to be taught by her, and it was no hard matter to determine which of the two he must be ruled by, his God or his wife. Learn hence never to be brought to sin by that which will not bring us off in the judgment: let not that bear us up in the commission, which will not bear us out in the trial: let us therefore never be overcome by importunity to act against our consciences, nor ever displease God to please the best friend we have in the world. But this is not the worst of it, he not only lays the blame upon his wife, but expresses it so as tacitly to reflect on God himself; it is the woman which thou gavest me; and gavest to be with me as my companion, my guide, and my acquaintance, she gave me of the tree, else I had not eaten of it. Thus he insinuates, that God was accessory to his sin; he gave him the woman, and she gave him the fruit, so that he seemed to have it but at one remove from God's own hand. Note, There is a strange proneness in those that are tempted to say they are tempted of God, as if our abusing of God's gifts would excuse our violation of God's laws: God gives us riches, honours, and relations, that we may serve him cheerfully in the enjoyment of them, but if we take

occasion from them to sin against him, instead of blaming providence for putting us into such a condition, we must blame ourselves for perverting the gracious designs of providence therein.

2. Eve lays all the blame upon the serpent; *the serpent beguiled me*. Sin is a brat that nobody is willing to own; a sign it is a scandalous thing: those that are willing enough to take the pleasure and profit of sin, are backward enough to take the blame and shame of it. The serpent, that subtle creature of thy making, which thou didst permit to come into paradise to us, he beguiled me, or made me to err, for our sins are our errors. Learn hence, 1. That satan's temptations are all beguilings: his arguments are all fallacies, his allurements are all cheats; when he speaketh fair, believe him not: sin deceives us, and by it cheats us. It is by the *deceitfulness of sin*, that the heart is hardened, see Rom. vii. 11. Heb. iii. 13. 2. That tho' *satan's subtlety drew us into sin*, yet it will not justify us in sin: Tho' he be the tempter, we are the sinners, and indeed it is *our own lust* that draws us aside and enticeth us, Jam. i. 14. Let it not therefore lessen our sorrow and humiliation for sin, that we were beguiled into it, but rather let it increase our self-indignation, that we should suffer ourselves to be beguiled by a known cheat and a sworn enemy. Well, this is all the prisoners at the bar have to say why sentence should not be passed, and execution awarded according to law, and this all is next to nothing, in some respects worse than nothing.

14. And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou has done this, thou art cursed above all cattle; and above every beast in the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. 15. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The prisoners being found guilty by their own confession, besides the personal and infallible knowledge of the judge, and nothing material being offered in arrest of judgment, God immediately proceeds to pass sentence, and in these verses he begins (where the sin began) with the serpent. God did not examine the serpent; nor ask him what he had done, or why he did it; but immediately sentenced him, (1.) Because he was already convicted of rebellion against God, and his malice and wickedness was notorious; not found by secret search, but openly avowed and declared as Sodom's. (2.) Because he was to be for ever excluded from all hope of pardon, and why should any thing be said to convince and humble him who was to find no place for repentance: his wound was not searched, because it was not to be cured. Some think the condition of the fallen angels was not declared desperate and helpless, until now they had seduced man into the rebellion.

The sentence passed upon the tempter may be considered; [1.] As lightning upon the serpent, the brute creature which satan made use of, which was, as the rest, made for the service of man; but was now abused to his hurt; therefore to testify a displeasure against sin, and a jealousy for the injured honour of Adam and Eve, God fastens a curse and reproach upon the serpent, and makes it to *groan, being burthened*, Rom. viii. 20. The devil's instruments must share in the devil's punishments; thus the bodies of the wicked, tho' only instruments of unrighteousness, shall partake of everlasting torments with the soul; the principal agent. Even the ox that killed a man must be stoned, *Exod. xxi. 28, 29*. See here, how God hates sin; and especially how much displeased he is with those that entice others to sin; it is a perpetual brand upon Jeroboam's name that he made Israel to sin. Now 1. The serpent is here laid under the curse of God; *Thou art cursed above all cattle*; even the creeping things when God made them were blessed of him, chap. i. 22. but sin turned the blessing into a curse. The serpent was *more subtle than any beast of the field*, ver. 1. and here *cursed above every beast in the field*; un sanctified subtlety often proves a great curse to a man; and the more crafty men are to do evil, the more mischief they do, and consequently they shall receive the greater damnation. Subtle tempters are the most accursed creatures under the sun.

2. He is here laid under man's reproach and enmity. (1.) He is to be for ever looked upon as a vile and despicable creature, and a proper object of scorn and contempt; upon thy belly thou shalt go, no longer upon feet, or half erect, but thou shalt crawl along, thy belly cleaving to the earth, an expression of a very abject miserable condition, *Psal. lxxiv. 25*. and thou shalt not avoid eating dust with thy meat. His crime was, that he tempted Eve to eat that which she should not; his punishment was, that he was necessitated to eat that which he would not. *Dust thou shalt eat*; which signifies not only a base and despicable condition, but a mean and sneaking spirit; it is said of those whose courage is departed from them, that they *lick the dust like a serpent*, Mic. vii. 17. How sad it is, that the serpent's curse should be the covetous worldlings choice, whose character it is that they *pant after the dust of the earth*, Amos ii. 7. These chuse their own delusions, and so shall their doom be. 2. He is to be for ever looked upon as a venomous noxious creature, and a proper object of hatred and detestation. *I will put enmity between the woman*. The inferior creatures being made for man, it was a curse upon any of them to be turned against man, and man against them.



them. And this is part of the serpent's curse. The serpent is hurtful to man, and oft bruise his heel, because they can reach no higher; nay notice is taken of his biting the horse heels, *Gen. xlix. 17.* But man is victorious over the serpent, and bruise his head, *i. e.* gives him a mortal wound, aiming to destroy the whole generation of vipers. It is the effect of this curse upon the serpent, that tho' that creature is subtle and very dangerous, yet it prevails not (as it would if God gave it commission) to the destruction of mankind; but this fear against serpents is much fortified by that promise of God to his people, *Psal. xci. 13. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder,* and that of Christ to his disciples, *Mar. xvi. 18. They shall take up serpents,* witness Paul, who was unhurt by the viper that fastened on his hand. Observe here, that the serpent and the woman had just now been very familiar and friendly in discourse about the forbidden fruit, and a wonderful agreement there was between them, but here they are irreconcilably set at variance. Note, sinful friendships justly end in mortal feuds: those that unite in wickedness will not unite long.

[2.] This sentence may be considered as levelled at the devil, who only made use of the serpent, as his vehicle in this appearance, but was himself the principal agent. He that spoke through the serpent's mouth is here struck at through the serpent's side, and is principally intended in the sentence, which like the pillar of cloud and fire, hath a dark side towards the devil, and a bright side towards our first parents and their seed. Great things are contained in these words.

1. A perpetual reproach is here fastened upon that great enemy both to God and man. Under the cover of the serpent he is here sentenced to be, (1.) Degraded and accursed of God. It is supposed, pride was the sin that turned angels into devils, which is here justly punished by a great variety of mortifications couched under the mean circumstances of a serpent crawling on his belly, and licking the dust. How art thou fallen O lucifer! He that would be above God, and would head a rebellion against him, is justly exposed here to contempt, and lies to be trodden on, a man's pride will bring him low, and God will humble those that will not humble themselves. (2.) *Devoted and adhered to of all mortals*, even those that are really seduced into his interest, yet profess a hatred and abhorrence of him, and all that are born of God make it their constant care to keep themselves, that that wicked one touch them not, *1 Joh. v. 18.* He is here condemned to a state of war, and irreconcilable enmity. (3.) *Destroyed and ruined at last by the great redeemer*, signified by the breaking of his head: his subtle politics shall be all baffled, his usurped power shall be entirely crushed, and he shall be for ever a captive to the injured honour of the divine sovereignty: by being told of this now, he was tormented before the time.

2. A perpetual quarrel is here commenced between the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of the devil among men; war proclaimed between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent: that war in heaven between Michael and the Dragon began now, *Rev. xii. 7.* It is the fruit of this enmity. 1. That there is a continual conflict between grace and corruption in the hearts of God's people, Satan, by their corruptions, assails them, buffets them, sits them, and seeks to devour them; they, by the exercise of their graces, resist him, wrestle with him, quench his fiery darts, force him to flee from them. Heaven and hell can never be reconciled, nor light and darkness, no more can sin and a sanctified soul, for these are contrary the one to the other. 2. That there is likewise a continual struggle between the wicked and the godly in this world: they that love God account those their enemies that hate him, *Psal. cxxxix. 11. 12.* And all the rage and malice of persecutors against the people of God, is the fruit of this enmity, which will continue while there is a godly man on this side heaven, and a wicked man on this side hell, *Matt. xx. 17. For the Son of man shall come, and he shall find flesh and blood.* *1 Joh. iii. 12.*

3. A gracious promise is here made of Christ, as the deliverer of fallen man from the power of Satan, tho' it was said to the serpent, yet it was said in the hearing of our first parents, who doubted took the hints of grace here given them, and saw a door of hope opened to them, and the following sentence upon themselves would have over-whelmed them. Here was the drawing of the gospel veil, no longer was the wound given, but the remedy was provided and revealed; here in the hand of the book, as the word is, *Rev. x. 2.* in the beginning of the Bible it is written of Christ, that he should *destroy* *the works of the devil*. By faith in this promise we have reason to think, that our first parents, and the patriarchs before the flood, were justified and saved, and to this promise, and the benefit of it infinitely serving God day and night they hoped to come. Notice is here given them of three things concerning Christ.

1. His incarnation, that he should be the seed of the woman, the seed of that woman, therefore his genealogy, *Luke iii.* goes so high as to show him to be the son of Adam, but God took the woman the honour to call him rather her seed, because she it was whom the devil had beguiled, and on whom Adam had laid the blame: herein God magnifies his grace, in that tho' the woman was first in the transgression, yet she shall be saved by child-bearing, as some read it *i. e.* by the promised seed which shall descend from her, *1 Tim. ii. 15.* He was *foretold* to be the seed of a

woman only; a virgin, that he might not be tainted with the corruption of our nature; he was sent forth *made of a woman*, *Gal. iv. 4.* that this promise here might be fulfilled. It speaks great encouragement to sinners, that their Saviour is *the seed of the woman*, *bone of our bone*, *Heb. ii. 11, 14.* Man is therefore sinful and unclean, because he is *born of a woman*, *Job xxv. 4.* and therefore *his days are full of trouble*, *Job xiv. 1.* But the seed of the woman was made sin and a curse for us, so saving us from both.

2. His sufferings and death, pointed at in Satan's bruising his heel, *i. e.* his human nature; Satan tempted Christ in the wilderness, to draw him to sin; and some think it was Satan that terrified Christ in his agony, to have driven him to despair; it was the devil that put it into the heart of Judas to betray Christ, Peter to deny him, the chief priest to prosecute him, the false witnesses to accuse him, and Pilate to condemn; aiming in all this, by destroying the Saviour to ruin the salvation, but, on the contrary, it was by death that Christ *destroyed him that had the power of death*, *Heb. ii. 14.* Christ's heel was bruised when his feet were pierced and nailed to the cross. And Christ's sufferings are continued in the sufferings of the saints for his name: the devil tempts them, casts them into prison, persecutes and slays them, and so bruises the heel of Christ, who is afflicted in their afflictions. But while the heels is bruised on earth, it is well the head is safe in heaven.

3. His victory over Satan thereby. Satan had now trampled upon the woman, and insulted over her, but the seed of the woman should be raised up in the fulness of time to avenge her quarrel, and to trample upon him, to spoil him, to lead him captive, and to *triumph over him*, *Col. ii. 15.* He shall break his head, *i. e.* he shall destroy all his politics, and all his powers, and give a total overthrow to his kingdom and interest: Christ baffled Satan's temptations, rescued souls out of his hands, cast him out of the bodies of people, dispossessed the strong man armed, and divided his spoil: by his death he gave a fatal and incurable blow to the devil's kingdom, a wound to the head of this beast that can never be healed. As his gospel gets ground, *Satan falls*, *Luke x. 18.* and is *bound*, *Rev. xx. 2.* By his grace he treads Satan under his peoples feet, *Rom. xvi. 20.* and will shortly cast him into the lake of fire, *Rev. xx. 10.* And the devil's perpetual overthrow will be the complete and everlasting joy and glory of the chosen remnant.

16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

We have here the sentence passed upon the woman for her sin; two things she is condemned to, a state of sorrow and a state of subjection, proper punishments of a sin in which she had gratified her pleasure and her pride.

1. She is here put into a state of sorrow; one particular of which only is instanced in, that in bringing forth children, but it includes all those impressions of grief and fear, which the mind of that tender sex is most apt to receive, and all the common calamities which they are liable to. Note, sin brought sorrow into the world; that was it that made the world a vale of tears, brought showers of trouble upon our heads, and opened springs of tears in our hearts, and so deluged the world; had we known no guilt we should have known no grief. The pains of child-bearing, which are great to a proverb, a scripture proverb, are the effect of sin; every pang, and every groan of the travelling woman speaks aloud the fatal consequences of sin: this comes of eating forbidden fruit. Observe, 1. The sorrows are here said to be multiplied, greatly multiplied: all the sorrows of this present time are so, many are the calamities which humane life is liable to, of various kinds, and oft repeated, the clouds returning after the rain; no marvel our sorrows are multiplied, when our sins are, both are innumerable evils. The sorrows of child-bearing are multiplied, for they include not only the travelling throws, but the breeding sicknesses before, (it is sorrow from the conception) and the nursing toils and vexations after, and after all, if the children prove wicked and foolish, they are more than ever, the heaviness of her that bore them. Thus are the sorrows multiplied, as one grief is over, another succeeds in this world. 2. It is God that multiplies our sorrows, I will do it: God, as a righteous judge, doth it, which ought to silence us under all our sorrows, as many as they are, we have deserved them all, and more; nay, God, as a tender father, doth it for our necessary correction, that we may be humbled for sin, and weaned from the world by all our sorrows; and the good we get by them, with the comfort we have under them, will abundantly balance all our sorrows, how greatly soever they are multiplied.

2. She is here put into a state of subjection: the whole sex, which by creation was equal with man, is for sin made inferior, and forbidden to *any authority*, *1 Tim. ii. 11, 12.* The wife particularly is hereby put under the dominion of her husband, and is not *at her own disposal*, of which see an instance in that law, *Num. xxx. 6, 7, 8.* where the husband is empowered, if he please, to dissolve the vows made by the wife. This sentence amounts only to that command, *Thou shalt be in subjection to the Lord thy husband*, but the entrance of sin has made that law a punishment, which otherwise it would not have been. If



man had not sinned he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and if the woman had not sinned she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness, and then the dominion had been no grievance, but our own sin and folly makes our yoke heavy: if Eve had not eaten forbidden fruit herself, and tempted her husband to it, she had never complained of her subjection; therefore it ought never to be complained of, tho' harsh, but sin must be complained of that made it so. Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider, that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence. Lastly, observe here how mercy is mixt with wrath in this sentence, the woman shall have sorrow, but it shall be in bringing forth children, and the sorrow shall be *forgot-ten for joy that a child is born*, John xvi. 21. she shall be subject, but it shall be to her own husband that loves her, not to a stranger, or an enemy: the sentence was not a curse to bring her to ruin, but a chastisement to bring her to repentance. It was well enmity was not put between the man and the woman, as there was between the serpent and the woman.

17. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkned unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. 18. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee: and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. 19. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

We have here the sentence passed upon Adam, which is pre-faced with a recital of his crime, *ver. 17. Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife*. He excused the fault, by laying it on his wife, she gave it me, but God doth not admit the excuse, she could but tempt him, she could not force him; tho' it was her fault to persuade him to eat it, it was his fault to hearken to her. Thus mens frivolous pleas will, in the day of God's judgment, not only be over-ruled, but turned against them, and made the grounds of their sentence, *Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee*. God put marks of his displeasure on Adam in three instances.

1. His habitation is by this sentence cursed, *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*; and the effect of that curse is, *Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee*. It is here intimated, that his habitation should be changed, he should no longer dwell in a distinguished blessed paradise, but should be removed to common ground, and that cursed. The ground or earth is here put for the whole visible creation, which, by the sin of man, is made subject to vanity, the several parts of it being not so serviceable to man's comfort and happiness, as they were designed to be when they were made, and would have been if he had not sinned. God gave the earth to the children of men, designing it to be a comfortable dwelling to them, but sin has altered the property of it, it is now cursed for man's sin, *i. e.* it is a dishonourable habitation, it speaks man mean, that his foundation is in the dust: it is a dry and barren habitation, it's spontaneous productions are now weeds and briars, something nauseous or noxious, what good fruits it produceth must be extorted from it by the ingenuity and industry of man: fruitfulness was it's blessing for man's service, *chap. i. 11, 29.* and now barrenness was it's curse for man's punishment: it is not what it was in the day it was created: sin turned a fruitful land into barrenness, and man being become as the wild ass's colt; he has the wild ass's lot, *Job xxxix. 6. the wilderness for his habitation, and the barren land his dwelling*, Psal. lxxviii. 6. Had not this curse been in part removed, for ought I know, the earth had been for ever barren, and had never produced any thing but thorns and thistles. The ground is cursed, *i. e.* doomed to destruction at the end of time, when the earth and *all the works that are therein shall be burnt up*, for the sin of man, the measure of whose iniquity will then be full, *2 Pet. iii. 7, 10.* But observe a mixture of mercy in this sentence; (1.) Adam is not himself cursed, as the serpent was, *ver. 14.* but only the ground for his sake; God had blessings in him, even the holy seed, *destroy it not, for that blessing is in it*, Isa. lxxv. 8. And he had blessings in store for him, therefore he is not directly and immediately cursed, but as it were at second hand. (2.) He is yet above-ground; the earth doth not open and swallow him up, only it is not what it was: as he continues alive notwithstanding his degeneracy from his primitive purity and rectitude, so the earth continues his habitation, notwithstanding his degeneracy from it's primitive beauty and fruitfulness. (3.) This curse upon the earth, which cut off all expectations of a happiness in things below, might direct and quicken him to look for bliss and satisfaction, only in things above.

2. His employments and enjoyments are all embittered to him. (1.) His business shall from henceforth become a toil to him, and he shall go on with it *in the sweat of his face*, *ver. 19.* His business before he sinned was a constant pleasure to him, the garden was then dressed without any uneasy labour, and kept without any uneasy care; but now his labour shall be a weariness, and

shall waste his body; his care shall be a torment, and shall afflict his mind. The curse upon the ground which made it barren, and produced thorns and thistles made his employment about it much the more difficult and toilsome. If Adam had not sinned he had not sweat. Observe here, 1. That labour is our duty, which we must faithfully perform; not as creatures only, but as criminals we are bound to work, it is part of our sentence, which idleness daringly defies. 2. That uneasiness and weariness with labour is our just punishment, which we must patiently submit to, and not complain of, since it is less than our iniquity deserves. Let not us by ordinate care and labour make our punishment heavier than God has made it, but rather study to lighten our burthen, and wipe off our sweat, by eying providence in all, and expecting rest shortly.

(2.) His food shall from henceforth become (in comparison with what it had been) unpleasant to him. (1.) The matter of his food is changed; he must now *eat the herb of the field*, and must no longer be feasted with the delicacies of the garden of Eden: having by sin made himself like *the beasts that perish*, he is justly turned to be a fellow-commoner with them, and to *eat grass as oxen, till he know that the heavens do rule*. (2.) There is a change in the manner of his eating it: *in sorrow*, *ver. 17.* and *in the sweat of his face*, *ver. 19.* he must eat of it. Adam could not but eat in sorrow all the days of his life, remembering the forbidden fruit he had eaten, and the guilt and shame he had contracted by it. Observe, 1. That human life is exposed to many miseries and calamities, which very much embitter the poor remains of it's pleasures and delights; some never eat with pleasure, (*Job xxi. 25.*) through sickness or melancholy; all, even the best, have cause to eat with sorrow for sin, and all, even the happiest in this world, have some allays to their joy, troops of diseases, disasters, and deaths, in various shapes entered the world with sin, and still ravage it. 2. That the righteousness of God is to be acknowledged in all the sad consequences of sin, *Wherefore, then should a living man complain?* Yet, in this part of the sentence, there is also a mixture of mercy; he shall sweat, but his toil shall make his rest the more welcome when he returns to his earth, as to his bed. He shall grieve, but he shall not starve, he shall have sorrow, but in that sorrow he shall eat bread, which shall strengthen his heart under his sorrows. He is not sentenced to eat dust as the serpent, only to eat the herb of the field.

3. His life also is but short; considering how full of trouble his days are, it is in favour to him that they are few, yet death being dreadful to nature; (yea, tho' life be unpleasant) that concludes the sentence. Thou shalt *return to the ground, out of which thou wast taken*, thy body, that part of thee which was taken *out of the ground* shall return to it again; for *dust thou art*: that speaks, 1. The first original of his body, it was made *of the dust*, nay, it was *made dust*, and was still so; so that there needed no more but to recal the grant of immortality, and to withdraw the power which was put forth to support it, and then he would of course *return to dust*. Or, 2. The present corruption and degeneracy of his mind, *dust thou art*, that is, thy precious soul is now lost and buried in the dust of the body, and the mire of the flesh; it was made spiritual and heavenly, but it is become carnal and earthy. His doom is therefore read, *to dust thou shalt return*. Thy body shall be forsaken by thy soul, and become itself a lump of dust, and then it shall be lodged in the grave, the proper place for it, and mingle itself with the dust of the earth, *our dust*, Psal. civ. 29. *Earth to earth, dust to dust*. Observe here, (1.) That man is a mean frail creature, little as dust, the small dust of the ballance, light as dust, altogether lighter than vanity; weak as dust, and of no consistency, our strength not the strength of stones, he that made us considers it, and *remembers that we are dust*, Psal. ciii. 13. Man is indeed *the chief part of the dust of the world*, Prov. viii. 26. but still he is dust. (2.) That he is a mortal dying creature, and hastening to the grave. Dust may be raised for a time into a little cloud, and may seem considerable while it is held up by the wind that raised it, but when the force of that is spent, it falls again, and returns to the earth, out of which it was raised, such a thing is man; a great man is but a great dust, and may return to his earth. (3.) That sin brought death into the world: if Adam had not sinned he had not died, *Rom. v. 12.* God intrusted Adam with a spark of immortality, which he, by a patient continuance in well-doing, might have blown up into an everlasting flame, but he foolishly blew it out by willful sin: and now death is *the wages of sin, and sin the sting of death*.

We must not go off from this sentence upon our first parents, which we are all so nearly concerned in, and feel from to this day, till we have considered two things.

1. How fitly the sad consequences of the sin upon the soul of Adam and his sinful race, were represented and figured out by this sentence, and perhaps were more intended in it than we are aware of. Tho' that misery only is mentioned which affected the body, yet that was a pattern of spiritual miseries, the curse that entered into the soul. 1. The pains of a woman in travail represent the terrors and pangs of a guilty conscience, awakened to a sense of sin: from the conception of lust these sorrows are greatly multiplied, and sooner or later will come upon the sinner like pain upon a woman in travail, which cannot be avoided. 2. The state of subjection which the woman was reduced to, represents that loss



of spiritual liberty and freedom of will, which is the effect of sin. The dominion of sin in the soul is compared to that of a husband, *Rom. vii. 1, — 5.* the sinner's desire is towards it, for he is fond of his slavery, and it rules over him. 3. The curse of barrenness which was brought upon the earth, and it's produce of briars and thorns is a fit representation of the barrenness of a corrupt and sinful soul in that which is good, and it's fruitfulness in evil. It is all grown over with thorns, and nettles cover the face of it, and therefore it is *nigh unto cursing*, *Heb. vi. 8.* The toil and sweat speak the difficulty which thro' the infirmity of the flesh man labours under in the service of God, and the work of religion, so hard is it now become to *enter into the kingdom of heaven*. 5. The embittering of his food to him speaks the soul's want of the comfort of God's favour, which is life and the bread of life. 6. The soul, like the body, returns to the dust of this world, it's tendency is that way; it has an earthy taint, *John iii. 31.*

2. How admirably the satisfaction our Lord Jesus made by his death and sufferings, answered the sentence here passed upon our first parents. 1. Did travelling pains come in with sin? We read of the *travail of Christ's soul*, *Isa. liii. 11.* and the pains of death he was held by, are called *edivrat*, *Acts ii. 24.* *the pains of a woman in travel*. 2. Did subjection come in with sin? Christ was made under the law, *Gal. iv. 4.* 3. Did the curse come in with sin? Christ was made a curse for us, died a cursed death, *Gal. iii. 13.* 4. Did thorns come in with sin? He was crowned with thorns for us. 5. Did sweat come in with sin? He sweat for us, as it had been great drops of blood. 6. Did sorrow come in with sin? He was a man of sorrows, his soul was in his agony exceeding sorrowful. 7. Did death come in with sin? He became obedient unto death. Thus is the plaster as wide as the wound; blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

20. And Adam called his wives name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

God having named the man, and called him Adam, which signifies red earth; he, in further token of dominion, named the woman, and called her Eve, *i. e.* life. Adam bears the name of the dying body, Eve of the living soul. The reason of the name is here given, some think by Moses the historian, others by Adam himself, because she was, *i. e.* was to be the mother of all living. He had called her *Ishah*, woman, before, as a wife, here he calls her *Evah*, life, as a mother. Now, 1. if this was done by divine direction as it was an instance of God's favour, and like the new naming of Abraham and Sarah, it was a seal of the covenant, and an assurance to them, that, notwithstanding their sin and his displeasure against them for it, he had not reversed that blessing wherewith he had blessed them, *Be fruitful and multiply*: it was likewise a confirmation of the promise now made, that the seed of the woman of this woman, should break the serpent's head. 2. If Adam did it of himself, it was an instance of his faith in the word of God: doubtless it was not done, as some have suspected in contempt or defiance of the curse, but rather, in a humble confidence and dependence upon the blessing. 1. The blessing of a reprieve, admitting the patience of God, that he should spare such sinners to be the parents of all living, and that he did not immediately shut up those fountains of the human life and nature, because they could send forth no other but polluted streams. 2. The blessing of a redeemer, the promised seed, to whom Adam had an eye, in calling his wife Eve, life, for he should be the life of all the living, and in him all the families of the earth should be blessed, in hope of which he thus triumphs.

21. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

We have here a further instance of God's care concerning our first parents, notwithstanding their sin. Tho' he correct his disobedient children, and put them under the marks of his displeasure, yet he doth not disinheret them, but like a tender father provides the herb of the field for their food, and coats of skins for their cloathing; thus the father provided for the returning prodigal, *Luke xv. 22, 23.* If the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he would not have done this for them. Observe, 1. That cloaths came in with sin, we had had no occasion for them either for defence or decency, if sin had not made us naked to our shame. Little reason therefore we have to be proud of our cloaths, which are but the badges of our poverty and infamy. 2. That when God made cloaths for our first parents he made them warm and strong, but coarse and very plain, not robes of scarlet, but coats of skin. Their cloaths were made not of silk and satin, but plain skins, not trimmed, nor embroidered, none of the ornaments which the daughters of Sion afterwards invented and prided themselves in. Let the poor that are meanly clad learn from hence not to complain, having food and a covering; let them be content, they are as well done so, as Adam and Eve were, and let the rich that are finely clad learn hence not to make the putting on of apparel their *adornment*, *1 Pet. iii. 3.* 3. That God is to be acknowledged with thankfulness, not only in giving us food, but in giving us cloaths also, *Gen. xxviii. 20.* The wool and the

flax is his, as well as *the corn and the wine*, *Hos. ii. 9.* 4. These coats of skin had a significancy. The beasts whose skins they were, must be slain, slain before their eyes to shew them what death is, (and as it is *Eccl. iii. 18.*) that they might see, that they themselves are beasts, mortal and dying. It is supposed they were not slain for food, but for sacrifice, to typify the great sacrifice, which, in the latter end of the world, should be offered once for all: thus the first thing that died was a sacrifice, or Christ in a figure, who is therefore said to be the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. These sacrifices were divided between God and man, in token of reconciliation; the flesh was offered to God, a whole burnt offering, the skins were given to man for cloathing, signifying that Jesus Christ having offered himself to God a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour, we are to cloath our selves with his righteousness, as with a garment, that the shame of our nakedness may not appear. Adam and Eve made for themselves aprons of fig-leaves, a covering too narrow for them to *wrap themselves in*, *Isa. xxviii. 20.* Such are all the rags of our own righteousness. But God made them coats of skins, large and strong, and durable, and fit for them, such is the righteousness of Christ; therefore put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.

22. And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand, and taste also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. 23. Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken. 24. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Sentence being passed upon the offenders, we have here execution in part done upon them immediately. Observe here,

1. How they were justly disgraced and shamed before God and the holy angels, by that ironical upbraiding of them with the issue of their enterprise, *Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.* A goodly god he makes! Doth he not? See what he has got, what preferments, what advantages, by eaten forbidden fruit! This is said to awaken and humble them, and to bring them to a sense of their sin and folly, and to repentance for it, that seeing themselves thus wretchedly deceived by following the devil's counsel, they might henceforth pursue the happiness God offers, in the way he prescribes. God thus *fills their faces with shame, that they may seek his name*, *Psal. lxxxiii. 16.* He puts them to this confusion in order to their conversion. True penitents will thus upbraid themselves, *What fruit have I now by sin?* *Rom. vi. 21.* Have I gained what I foolishly promised my self in a sinful way? No, no, it never proved what it pretended, but the contrary.

2. How they were justly discarded, and shut out of paradise, which was a part of the sentence implied in that, *thou shalt eat the herb of the field.* Here we have,

1. The reason God gave why he shut him out of paradise; not only because he had put forth his hand, and taken of the tree of knowledge, which was his sin, but lest he should again put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, (which is now forbidden him by the sentence, as before the tree of knowledge was forbidden him by the law) and should dare to eat of that tree, and so profane a divine sacrament, and defy a divine sentence, and yet flatter himself with a conceit that thereby he should live for ever. Observe, 1. There is a foolish proneness in those that have rendered themselves unworthy of the substance of Christian privileges to catch at the signs and shadows of them. Many that like not the terms of the covenant, yet for their reputation sake are fond of the seals of it. 2. It is not only justice but kindness to such to be denied them, for by usurping that which they have no title to, they affront God, and make their sin the more heinous: and by building their hopes upon a wrong foundation they render their conversion the more difficult, and their ruin the more deplorable.

2. The method God took in giving him this bill of divorce, and expelling and excluding him from this garden of pleasure. He turned him out, and kept him out.

1. He turned him out, from the garden to the common. This is twice mentioned, *ver. 23. he sent him forth*, and then, *ver. 24. he drove them out.* God bid him go out; told him, that was no place for him, he should no longer occupy and enjoy that garden: but he liked the place too well to be willing to part with it, and therefore God drove him out, made him go out whether he would or no. This signified the exclusion of him, and all his guilty race from that communion with God, which was the bliss and glory of paradise; the token of God's favour to him, and his delight in the sons of men which he had in his innocent estate were now suspended; the communications of his grace were withheld, and Adam became weak, and like other men, as Samson when the *spirit of the Lord was departed from him*; his acquaintance with God was lessened and lost, and that correspondence which had been settled between man and his maker was interrupted, and broken off. He was driven out as one unworthy of this honour, and



and incapable of this service. Thus he and all mankind by the fall forfeited, and lost communion with God.

But whither did he send him when he turned him out of Eden? He might justly have chased him out of the world, *Job* xviii. 18. but he only chased him out of the garden: he might justly have cast him down to hell, as the angels that sinned were, when they were shut out from the heavenly paradise, *2 Pet.* ii. 4. But man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken. He was only sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment. He was sent to the ground, not to the grave; to the work-house, not to the dungeon, not to the prison-house; to hold the plough, not drag the chain. His tilling the ground would be recompensed by his eating its fruits; and his converse with the earth whence he was taken was improvable to good purposes, to keep him humble, and to mind him of his latter end. Observe then, that though our first parents were excluded from the privileges of their state of innocence, yet they were not abandoned to despair; God's thoughts of love designing them for a second state of probation upon new terms.

1. He kept him out, and forbid him all hopes of a re-entry, for he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, a detachment of cherubims, God's hosts, armed with a dreadful and irresistible power, represented by flaming swords which turned every way, on that side the garden which lay next to the place whither Adam was sent, to keep the way that led to the tree of life, so that he could not either steal, or force an entry; for who can make a pass against an angel on his guard, or gain a pass made good by such a force. Now this intimated to Adam, 1. That God was displeased with him; tho' he had mercy in store for him, yet at present he was angry with him, was turned to be his enemy, and fought against him, for here was a sword drawn, *Num.* xxvii. 23. and that he was to him a consuming fire, for it was a flaming sword. 2. That the angels were at war with him; no peace with the heavenly hosts while he was in rebellion against their Lord and ours. 3. That the way to the tree of life was shut up, viz. that way which at first he was put into, the way of spotless innocence. It is not said, that the cherubims were set to keep him and his for ever from the tree of life; thanks be to God there is a paradise set before us, and a tree of life in the midst of it, which we rejoice in the hopes of; but they were set to keep that way of the tree of life, which hitherto they had been in; that is, it was henceforward in vain for him and his to expect righteousness, life and happiness, by virtue of the first covenant, for it was irreparably broken and could never be pleaded, nor any benefit taken by it. The command of that covenant being broken, the curse of it is in full force, it leaves no room for repentance, but we are all undone if we be judged by that covenant: God revealed this to Adam, not to drive him to despair, but to oblige him, and quicken him to look for life and happiness in the promised seed; by whom the flaming sword is removed, God and his angels reconciled to us, and a new and living way into the holiest consecrated, and laid open for us.

#### C H A P. IV.

In this chapter we have both the world and the church in a family, in a little family, in Adam's family, and a specimen given of the character and state of both in after-ages, nay in all ages to the end of time. As all mankind were represented in Adam, so that great distinction of mankind into saints and sinners, godly and wicked; the children of God, and the children of the wicked one was here represented in Cain and Abel, and an early instance of the enmity which was lately put between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. We have here, 1. The birth, names, and callings, of Cain and Abel, ver. 1, 2. 2. Their religion and different success in it, ver. 3, 4, and part of ver. 5. 3. Cain's anger at God, and the reproof of him for that anger, ver. 5, 6, 7. 4. Cain's murder of his brother, and the process against him for that murder. The murder committed, ver. 8. The proceedings against him. (1.) His arraignment, ver. 9. former part. (2.) His plea, ver. 9. latter part. (3.) His conviction ver. 10. (4.) The sentence passed upon him, ver. 11, 12. (5.) His complaint against the sentence, ver. 13, 14. (6.) The ratification of the sentence ver. 15. (7.) The execution of the sentence, ver. 15, 16. 5. The family and posterity of Cain, ver. 17-24. 6. The birth of another son and grandson of Adam, ver. 25, 26.

1. **A**ND Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. 2. And she again bare his brother Abel: and Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Adam and Eve had many sons and daughters, *ch.* v. 4. But Cain and Abel seem to have been the two eldest, and some think they were twins, and as Esau and Jacob the elder hated, and the younger loved. Tho' God had cast them out of paradise he did not write them childless, but to shew that he had other blessings in store for them, he preserved to them the benefit of that first blessing of increase. Tho' they were sinners, nay, tho' they

were penitents, they did not write themselves comfortless, having the promise of a Saviour to support themselves with. We have here, (1.) the names of their two sons. (1.) Cain signifies possession, for Eve, when she bare him, said with joy and thankfulness, and great expectation, *I have gotten a man from the Lord.* Observe, that children are God's gifts, and he must be acknowledged in the building up of our families. It doubles and sanctifies our comfort in them when we see them coming to us from the hand of God, who will not forsake the works and gifts of his own hand. Tho' Eve bare him with the sorrows that were the consequence of sin, yet she did not lose the sense of the mercy in her pains. Comforts tho' allayed, are more than we deserve; and therefore our complaints must not drown our thanksgivings. Many suppose that Eve had a conceit that this son was the promised seed, and therefore she thus triumphed in him, and it may be read, *I have gotten a man the Lord.* God-man. If so, she was wretchedly mistaken, as Samuel, when he said, *Surely the Lord's anointed is before me*, *1 Sam.* xvi. 6. when children are born, who can foresee what they will prove? He that was thought to be a man the Lord, or least a man for the Lord, and for his service as priest of the family became an enemy to the Lord. The less we expect from creatures, the more tolerable will disappointments be. (2.) Abel signifies vanity, when she thought she had obtained the promised seed in Cain, she was so taken up with that possession, that another son was as vanity to her. To those who have an interest in Christ, and make them their all, other things are as nothing at all. It intimates likewise that the longer we live in this world, the more we may see of the vanity of it; what at first we are fond of as a possession, afterwards we see cause to be dead to, as a trifle. The name given to this son is put upon the whole race, *Psa.* xxxix. 5. Every man is at his best estate, Abel, vanity. Let us labour to see both ourselves and others so. *Childhood and youth are vanity.* 2. The employments of Cain and Abel. Observe, 1. They both had a calling. Tho' they were heirs apparent to the world, their birth noble, and their possessions large; yet they were not brought up in idleness. God gave their father a calling, even in innocence, and he gave them one. Note, It is the will of God we should every one of us have something to do in this world. Parents ought to bring up their children to business: *Give them a Bible and a calling* (said good Mr Dod) *and God be with them.* 2. Their employments were different, that they might trade and exchange with one another, as there was occasion. The members of the body politic have need one of another, and mutual love is helped by mutual commerce. 3. Their employments belonged to the husbandman's calling, their father's profession, a needful calling, for *the king himself is served of the field*, but a labourious calling, which required constant care and attendance: it is now looked upon as a mean calling, the poor of the land serve for vine-dressers, and husbandmen, *Jer.* lii. 16. But the calling was far from being a dishonour to them, rather, they were an honour to it. 4. It should seem, by the order of the story, that Abel, tho' the younger brother, yet entered first into his calling, and probably his example drew in Cain. 5. Abel chose that employment which did most befriended contemplation and devotion, for that hath been looked upon as the advantage of a pastoral life. Moses and David kept sheep, and in their solitudes conversed with God. Note, That calling and condition of life is best for us, and to be chosen by us which is best for our souls; that which least exposeth us to sin, and gives us most opportunity of serving and enjoying God.

3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: 5. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Here is 1. The devotion of Cain, and Abel. In process of time, when they had made some improvement in their respective callings, *Heb.* *At the end of days*, either at the end of the year when they kept their feast of in-gathering, or perhaps an annual fast in remembrance of the fall; or at the end of the days of the week, the seventh day, which was the sabbath; at some set time Cain and Abel brought to Adam, as the priest of the family, each of them an offering to the Lord; for the doing of which we have reason to think there was a divine appointment given to Adam, as a token of God's favour to him, and his thoughts of love towards him and his, notwithstanding their apostacy. God would thus try Adam's faith in the promise, and his obedience to the remedial law; he would thus settle a correspondence again between Heaven and earth, and give shadows of good things to come. Observe here, 1. That the religious worship of God is no novel invention, but an ancient institution. It is that which was from the beginning, *1 Job.* i. 1. it is the good old way, *Jer.* vi. 16. The city of our God is indeed that joyous city whose antiquity is of ancient days, *Isa.* xxiii. 7. Truth got the start of error, and piety of profaneness. 2. That it is a good thing for children to be well taught when they are young, and trained up betimes in religious services, that



when they come to be capable of acting for themselves they may of their own accord *bring an offering to God*. In this nurture of the Lord parents must bring up their children, *Eph. vi. 4. Gen. xviii. 19.* 3. That we should every one of us honour God with what we have, according as he hath prospered us. According as their employments and possessions were, so they brought their offering. See *1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Our merchandise and our hire*, whatever it is, must be *holiness to the Lord*, *Isa. xxiii. 18.* He must have his dues of it in works of piety and charity, the support of religion and the relief of the poor; thus we must now *bring our offering*, with an upright heart, and *with such sacrifices God is well pleased*. 4. That hypocrites and evil doers may be found going as far as the best of God's people in the external services of religion. Cain brought an offering with Abel, nay, Cain's offering is mentioned first, as if he were the more forward of the two. An hypocrite may possibly hear as many sermons, say as many prayers, and give as much alms as a good Christian, and yet for want of sincerity come short of acceptance with God. The Pharisee and Publican went to the temple to pray, *Luke xviii. 10.*

2. The different success of their devotions. That which is to be aimed at in all acts of religion is God's acceptance, we speed well if we attain that, but in vain do we worship if we miss of that, *2 Cor. v. 9.* Perhaps to a stander by, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel would have seemed both alike good: Adam accepted them both, but God did not, *who sees not as man sees*. God, had respect to Abel and to his offering, and shewed his acceptance of it, probably by fire from heaven; but to Cain and to his offering he had not respect. We are sure there was a good reason for this difference; the governor of the world, tho' an absolute sovereign, doth not act arbitrarily in dispensing his smiles and frowns. 1. There was a difference in the characters of the persons offering: Cain was a wicked man, led an ill life, under the reigning power of the world and the flesh, and therefore his sacrifice was an *abomination to the Lord*, *Prov. xv. 8. a vain oblation*, *Isa. i. 13.* God had no respect to Cain himself, and therefore no respect to his offering, as the manner of the expression intimates. But Abel was a righteous man, he is called *righteous Abel*, *Matth. xxiii. 35.* his heart was upright, and his life was pious, he was one of those whom *God's countenance beholds*, *Psal. xi. 7.* and whose prayer is therefore *his delight*, *Prov. xv. 8.* God had respect to him as a holy man, and therefore to his offering as a holy offering. The tree must be good, else the fruit cannot be pleasing to the heart-searching God. 2. There was a difference in the offerings they brought. It is expressly said, *Heb. xi. 4.* Abel's was a *more excellent sacrifice than Cain's*: either, (1.) in the nature of it. Cain's was only a *sacrifice of acknowledgment* offered to the Creator, the meat offerings of the fruit of the ground were no more, and for ought I know might have been offered in innocency: but Abel brought a *sacrifice of atonement*, the blood whereof was shed in order to remission, thereby owning himself a sinner, deprecating God's wrath, and imploring his favour in a mediator. Or, (2.) in the qualities of the offering. Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, any thing that came next hand, what he had not occasion for himself, or was not marketable, but Abel was curious in the choice of his offering, not the lame, or the lean, or the refuse, but the *firstlings of the flock*, the best he had, and the fat thereof, the best of those best. Hence the Hebrew doctors give it for a general rule, that every thing that is for the name of the good God, must be the goodliest and best. It is fit that he who is the first and best, should have the first and best of our time, strength, and service. 3. The great difference was this, that Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not. There was a difference in the principle upon which they went. Abel offered with an eye to God's will as his rule, and God's glory as his end, and in dependance upon the promise of a redeemer. But Cain did what he did only for company, or to save his credit, not in faith, and so it turned into sin to him. Abel was a penitent believer, like the publican that went away justified. Cain was unhumbled, and his confidence was within himself like the Pharisee who glorified himself, but was not so much as justified before God.

3. Cain's displeasure at the difference God made between his sacrifice and Abel's. Cain was very wroth, which presently appeared in his very looks, for his countenance fell; which speaks not so much his grief and discontent, as his malice and rage. His sullen churlish countenance, and a down-look betrayed his passionate resentments: he carried ill nature in his face, and the shew of his countenance witnessed against him. This anger speaks, 1. His enmity to God, and the indignation he had conceived against him for making such a difference between his offering and his brother's. He should have been angry at himself for his own infidelity and hypocrisy, by which he had forfeited God's acceptance, and his countenance should have fallen in repentance and holy shame, as the Publican's, who *would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven*, *Luke xviii. 13.* But instead of that he flies out against God, as if he were partial and unfair in disposing his smiles and frowns, and as if he had done him a deal of wrong. Note, It is a certain sign of an unhumbled heart to quarrel with those rebukes, which we have by our own sin brought upon ourselves. *The foolishness of man perverts his way*, and then to make ill worse, his heart fretteth against the Lord, *Prov. xix. 3.* 2. His envy of his brother who had the honour to be publicly owned. Though

his brother had no thought of having any slur put upon him, nor did now insult over him to provoke him, yet he conceived a hatred of him as an enemy, or, which is equivalent, a rival. Note, 1. It is common for those who have rendered themselves unworthy of God's favour by their presumptuous sins to have indignation against those who are dignified and distinguished by it. The Pharisees walked in this way of Cain, when they *neither entered into the kingdom of God themselves*, nor *suffered those that were entering, to go in*, *Luke xi. 52.* Their eye is evil because their master's eye, and the eye of their fellow servants is good. 2. Envy is a sin that commonly carries with it both its own discovery in the paleness of the looks, and its own punishment in the rottenness of the bones.

6. And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

God is here reasoning with Cain to convince him of the sin and folly of his anger and discontent, and to bring him into a good temper again, that further mischief might be prevented. It is an instance of God's patience and condescending goodness, that he would deal thus tenderly with so ill a man, in so ill a thing: *He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. Thus the father of the prodigal, argued the case with the elder son, *Luke xv. 28, &c.* And God with those Israelites, who said, *The way of the Lord is not equal*, *Ezek. xviii. 25.* God puts Cain himself upon enquiring into the cause of his discontent, and considering whether it were indeed a just cause, *Why is thy countenance fallen*: Observe, 1. That God takes notice of all our sinful passions and discontents. There is not an angry look, an envious look, a fretful look, that escapes his observing eye. 2. That most of our sinful heats and disquietments would soon vanish before a strict and impartial enquiry into the cause of them. *Why am I wroth*? Is there a real cause, a just cause, a proportionable cause, for it? Why am I so soon angry? Why so very angry, and so implacable? To reduce Cain to his right mind again, it is here made evident to him. 1. That he had no reason to be angry at God, for he had proceeded according to the settled and invariable rules of government, suited to a state of probation. He sets before men life and death, the blessing and the curse, and then *renders to them according to their works*, and differenceth them according as they difference themselves, so shall their doom be. The rules are just, and therefore his ways according to those rules must needs be equal, and he will be justified when he speaks.

1. God sets before Cain life and a blessing. *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted*? No doubt thou shalt, nay, thou knowest thou shalt, either, 1. *If thou hadst done well*, as thy brother did, thou shouldest have been accepted as he was. *God is no respecter of persons*, hates nothing that he has made, denies his favour to none but those that have forfeited it, is an enemy to none but those who by sin have made him their enemy. So that if we come short of acceptance with him, we must thank ourselves, the fault is wholly our own, if we had done our duty, we had not missed of his mercy. This will justify God in the destruction of sinners, and will aggravate their ruin; there is not a damned sinner in hell but if he had done well, as he might have done, had been a glorified saint in Heaven. Every mouth will shortly be stopt with this. Or, 2. If now thou do well, if thou repent of thy sin, reform thy heart and life, and bring thy sacrifice in a better manner, if thou not only do that which is good, but do it well, thou shalt yet be accepted; thy sin shall be pardoned, thy comfort and honour restored, and all shall be well. See here the effect of a mediator's interposal between God and man; we do not stand upon the foot of the first covenant which left no room for repentance, but God is come upon new terms with us. Tho' we have offended, if we repent and return, we shall find mercy. See how early the gospel was preached, and the benefit of it here offered even to one of the chief of sinners.

2. He sets before him death and a curse; but if not well seeing thou didst not do well, not offer in faith, and in a right manner, *sin lieth at the door*, i. e. sin was imputed to thee, and thou was frowned upon and rejected as a sinner. So high a charge had not been laid at thy door, if thou hadst not brought it upon thyself, by not doing well. Or, as it is commonly taken, if now thou doest not do well, if thou persist in this wrath, and instead of humbling thyself before God, harden thyself against him, *sin lieth at the door*, that is, 1. Further sin. Now anger is in thy heart, murder is at the door. The way of sin is down-hill, and men go from bad to worse. They who do not sacrifice well, but are careless and remiss in their devotion to God, expose themselves to the worst temptations, and perhaps the most scandalous sin lies at the door. They who do not keep God's ordinances are in danger of committing all abominations, *Lev. xviii. 30.*

Or, 2. The punishment of sin: so near a-kin, are sin and punishment. that the same word in Hebrew signifies both. If sin be harboured in the house, the curse waits at the door, like a bailiff ready to arrest the sinner whenever he looks out. It lies as if it slept, but it lies at the door where it will soon be awaked, and then it will appear that the damnation slumbered not. Sin will find thee



thee out, Num. xxxii. 23. Yet some chuse to understand this also as an intimation of mercy. If thou do not well, sin, i. e. the sin-offering lies at the door, and thou mayst take the benefit of it. The same word signifies sin, and a sacrifice for sin. Tho' thou hast not done well, yet do not despair, the remedy is at hand: the propitiation is not far to seek, lay hold on it, and the iniquity of thy holy things shall be forgiven thee. Christ, the great sin-offering, is said to *stand at the door*, Rev. iii. 20. And those well deserve to perish in their sins that will not go to the door for an interest in the sin-offering. All this considered, Cain had no reason to be angry at God, but at himself only. 2. He shews him that he had no reason to be angry at his brother, *unto thee shall be his desire*, he shall continue his respect to thee as an elder brother, and thou, as the first-born, shalt rule over him as much as ever. God's acceptance of Abel's offering did not transfer the birth-right to him (which Cain was jealous of) nor put upon him that excellency of dignity, and excellency of power, which is said to belong to it, Gen. xlix. 3. God did not so intend it, Abel did not so interpret it, there was no danger of it's being improved to Cain's prejudice, why then should he be so much exasperated? Observe here, 1. That the difference which God's grace makes, doth not alter the distinctions which God's providence makes, but preserves them, and obliges us to do the duty which results from them: believing servants must be obedient to unbelieving masters. Dominion is not founded in grace, nor will religion warrant disloyalty or disrespect in any relation. 2. That the jealousies which civil powers have sometimes conceived of the true worshippers of God as dangerous to their government, enemies to Cæsar, and hurtful to kings and provinces, (on which suspicion persecutors have grounded their rage against them) are very unjust and unreasonable. Whatever pretenders are, it is certain good Christians are the best subjects, and the quietest in the land; their desire is towards their governors, and they shall rule over them.

8. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

We have here the progress of Cain's anger, and the issue of it in Abel's murder; which may be considered two ways.

1. As Cain's sin, and a scarlet crimson it was, a sin of the first magnitude, a sin against the light and law of nature; and which the consciences even of bad men have startled at; see in it, 1. The sad effects of sin's entrance into the world, and into the hearts of men: see what a root of bitterness the corrupt nature is, which bears this gall and wormwood. Adam's eating forbidden fruit seemed but a little sin, but it opened the door to the greatest. 2. A fruit of the enmity which is in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman. As Abel leads the van in the noble army of martyrs, Matth. xxiii. 35. So Cain stands in the front of the ignoble army of persecutors, Jude xi. so early did he that *was after the flesh, persecute him that was after the spirit, and so it is now more or less*, Gal. iv. 24. and so it will be till the war shall end in the eternal salvation of all the saints, and the eternal perdition of all that hate them. 3. See also what comes of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, if they be indulged and cherished in the soul, they are in danger of involving men in the horrid guilt of murder itself. Rash anger is heart-murder, Matth. v. 21, 22. much more is malice so; he that hates his brother is already a murderer before God, and if God leave him to himself, he wants nothing but an opportunity of being a murderer before the world.

Many were the aggravations of Cain's sin. 1. It was his brother, his own brother, that he murdered; his own mother's son, Psal. l. 20. whom he ought to have loved; his younger brother whom he ought to have protected. 2. He was a good brother, one that had never done him any wrong, nor given him the least provocation in word or deed; but one whose desire had been always towards him, and who had been in all instances dutiful and respectful to him. 3. He had fair warning given him before of this: God himself had told him what would come of it, yet he persisted in his barbarous design. 4. It should seem that he covered it with a shew of friendship and kindness. *He talked with Abel his brother*, freely and familiarly, lest he should suspect danger, and keep out of his reach. Thus Joab kissed Abner, and then killed him; Absalom feasted Amnon, and then killed him. The Septuagint tell us, he said to Abel, *Let us go into the field*, if so, we are sure Abel did not understand it, (according to the modern sense) as a challenge, else he would not have accepted it, but as a brotherly invitation to go together to their work. The Chaldee paraphrast adds, that Cain when they were in discourse in the field, maintained that there was no judgment to come, no future state, no rewards and punishment in the other world, and that when Abel spoke in defence of the truth, Cain took that occasion to fall upon him. However, 5. That which the scripture tells us was the reason wherefore he slew him was a sufficient aggravation of the murder, it was *because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous*, so that herein he shewed himself to be of that wicked one, 1 Joh. iii. 12. a child of the devil, as being an enemy to all righteousness, even in his own brother; and in this employed immediately by the

destroyer. Nay, 6. In killing his brother, he directly struck at God himself, for God's accepting of Abel was the provocation pretended, and for that very reason he hated Abel, because God loved him. 7. The murder of Abel was the more inhuman, because there were now so few men in the world to replenish it. The life of a man is precious at any time; but it was in a special manner precious now, and could ill be spared.

2. As Abel's suffering. Death reigned ever since Adam sinned, but we read not of any taken captive by him till now; and now, 1. The first that dies is a saint; one that was accepted and beloved of God, to shew that tho' the promised seed was so far to destroy him that had the power of death, as to save believers from it's sting, yet that still they should be exposed to it's stroke. The first that went to the grave, went to Heaven; God would secure to himself the first fruits, the first born to the dead, that first opened the womb into another world. Let this take off the terror of death, that it was betimes the lot of God's chosen, which alters the property of it. Nay, 2. the first that dies is a martyr; and dies for his religion; and of such it may more truly be said than of soldiers, that they die in the bed of honour; Abel's death has not only no curse in it, but it has a crown in it, so admirably well is the property of death altered, that it is not only become innocent and inoffensive to those that die in Christ, but honourable and glorious to those that die for him. Let us not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, nor shrink if we be called to resist unto blood, for we know there is a crown of life for all that are faithful unto death.

9. And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? and he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? 10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood, crieth unto me from the ground. 11. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. 12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

We have here a full account of the trial and condemnation of the first murderer; civil courts of judicature not being yet erected for this purpose as they were after, Gen. ix. 6. God himself sits judge, for he is the God to whom vengeance belongs, and who will be sure to make inquisition for blood, especially the blood of saints.

Observe, (1.) The arraignment of Cain: *The Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother?* Some think Cain was thus examined, the next sabbath after the murder committed, when *the sons of God came*, as usual, *to present themselves before the Lord*, in a religious assembly, and Abel was missing, whose place did not use to be empty; for the God of Heaven takes notice who is present at, and who is absent from, publick ordinances. Cain is asked not only because there was just cause to suspect him, he having discovered a malice against Abel, and having been last with him, but because God knew him to be guilty; yet he asks him, that he might draw from him a confession of his crime, for those who would be justified before God, must accuse themselves, and the penitent will do so.

(2.) Cain's plea; he pleads not guilty, and adds rebellion to his sin. For, 1. He endeavours to cover a deliberate murder with a deliberate lie; *I know not*. He knew well enough what was become of Abel, and yet had the impudence to deny it. Thus in Cain the devil was both a murderer, and a liar from the beginning. See how sinners minds are blinded, and their hearts hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; those are strangely blind that think it possible to conceal their sins from a God that sees all; and those are strangely hard that think it desirable to conceal them from a God who pardons those only that confess. 2. He impudently charges his judge with folly and injustice in putting this question to him. *Am I my brother's keeper?* He should have humbled himself, and have said, *Am not I my brother's murderer?* But he flies in the face of God himself as if he had asked him an impertinent question, which he was no way obliged to give an answer to, *Am I my brother's keeper?* Sure he is old enough to take care of himself, nor did I ever take any charge of him. Some think he reflects on God and his providence, q. d. Art not thou his keeper, if he be missing; on thee be the blame, and not on me, who never undertook to keep him. Note, that a charitable concern for our brethren, as their keepers, is a great duty which is strictly required of us, but is generally neglected by us. They who are unconcerned in the concerns of their brethren, and take no care when they have opportunity to prevent their hurt in their bodies, goods, or good name; especially in their souls, do in effect speak Cain's language. See Lev. xix. 17. Phil. ii. 4. (3.) The conviction of Cain, ver. 10. God gave no direct answer to his question, but rejects his plea as false and frivolous; *what hast thou done*, thou makest a light matter of it, but hast thou considered what an evil thing it is? How deep the stain, how heavy the burden of this guilt is? Thou thinkest to conceal it, but it is to no purpose, the evidence against thee is clear and uncontestable, *the voice of thy brother's blood cries*: He speaks as if the blood itself were both



both witness and prosecutor, because God's own knowledge testified against him, and God's own justice demanded satisfaction. Observe here, 1. That murder is a crying sin, none more so. Blood calls for blood, the blood of the murdered for the blood of the murderer; it cries in the dying words of Zechariah, *2 Chron. xxiv. 22. The Lord look upon it, and require it*; or those of the souls under the altar, *Rev. vi. 10. How long Lord, holy, and true?* The patient sufferers cried for pardon, *Father forgive them*, but their blood cries for vengeance. Though they hold their peace their blood has a loud and constant cry, which the ear of the righteous God is always open to. 2. The blood is said to cry from the ground, the earth, which is said, *ver. 11. to open her mouth to receive his brothers blood from his hand*. The earth did as it were blush to see her own face stained with such blood, and therefore opened her mouth to hide that which she could not hinder. When the Heaven revealed his iniquity, the earth also rose up against him, (*Job xx. 27.*) and groaned for being thus made *subject to vanity*, *Rom. viii. 20, 22*. Cain it is likely buried the blood and the body to conceal his crime, but murder will out. He did not bury them so deep but the cry of them reached Heaven. 3. In the original, the word is plural, thy brother's bloods, not only his blood, but the blood of all those that might have descended from him. Or, the blood of all the seed of the woman, who should in like manner seal the truth with their blood; Christ puts all on one score, *Matth. xxiii. 35*. Or, because account was kept of every drop of blood shed. How well is it for us that the blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel, *Heb. xii. 24*. Abel's blood cried for vengeance, Christ's blood cries for pardon.

(4.) The sentence passed upon Cain, *And now art thou cursed from the earth*, *ver. 11*. Observe here, 1. He is cursed, separated to all evil, laid under the wrath of God, as it is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *Rom. i. 18*. who knows the extent and weight of a divine curse, how far it reaches, how deep it pierces; God's pronouncing a man cursed makes him so, for those whom he curses they are cursed indeed. The curse for Adam's disobedience terminated on the ground, *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*; but that for Cain's rebellion fell immediately upon himself, *thou art cursed*, for God had mercy in store for Adam, but none for Cain. We have all deserved this curse, and it is only in Christ that believers are saved from it and inherit the blessing, *Gal. iii. 10, 13*. 2. He is cursed from the earth. Thence the cry came up to God, thence the curse came up to Cain. God could have taken vengeance by an immediate stroke from Heaven, by the sword of an angel, or by a thunderbolt, but he chose to make the earth the avenger of blood; to continue him upon the earth, and not presently to cut him off, and yet to make even that his curse. The earth is always near us, we cannot fly from it, so that if that be the executioner of divine wrath, it is unavoidable; it is sin, that is, the punishment of sin, lying at the door. Cain found his punishment there where he chose his portion, and set his heart.

Two things we expect from the earth, and by this curse both are denied to Cain, and taken from him, sustenance and settlement.

1. Sustenance out of the earth is here withheld from him. It is a curse upon him in his enjoyments, and particularly in his calling, *when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength*. Note, every creature is to us what God makes it; a comfort or a cross; a blessing or a curse. If the earth yield not her strength to us we must therein acknowledge God's righteousness, for we have not yielded our strength to him. The ground was cursed before to Adam, but it was now doubly cursed to Cain. That part of it which fell to his share, and which he had the occupation of was made unfruitful and uncomfortable to him, by the blood of Abel. Note, the wickedness of the wicked brings a curse upon all they do, and all they have, *Deut. xxviii. 15, &c.* and that curse embitters all they have, and disappoints them in all they do.

2. Settlement on the earth is here denied him. *A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth*. By this he was condemned, 1. To perpetual disgrace and reproach among men. It should be ever looked upon as a scandalous thing to harbour him, converse with him, or shew him any countenance. And justly was a man that had divested himself of all humanity, abhorred and abandoned by all mankind, and made infamous.

3. To perpetual disquietment and horror in his own mind. His own guilty conscience should haunt him wherever he went, and make him Magor-missabib, a terror round about. What rest can those find, what settlement that carry their own disturbance with them in their bosoms wherever they go. They must needs be fugitives that are thus tossed. There is not a more restless fugitive upon earth than he that is continually pursued by his own guilt, nor a viler vagabond than he that is at the beck of his own lusts.

This was the sentence passed upon Cain: and even in this there was mercy mixt, that he was not immediately cut off, but had space given him to repent, for God is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.

13. And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14. Behold, thou hast driven

me out this day from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. 15. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

We have here a further account of the proceedings against Cain. 1. Here's Cain's complaint of the sentence passed upon him as hard and severe. Some make him to speak the language of despair; and read it, *Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven*, and so what he saith is a reproach and affront to the mercy of God, which those only shall have the benefit of that hope in it. There is forgiveness with the God of pardons for the greatest sins and sinners, but they forfeit it who despair of it. Just now Cain made nothing of his sin, but now he is in the other extreme; Satan drives his vassals from presumption to despair. We cannot think too bad of sin, provided we do not think it unpardonable. But Cain seems rather to speak the language of indignation, *my punishment is greater than I can bear*, and so what he saith is a reproach and affront to the justice of God, and a complaint not of the greatness of his sin, but the extremity of his punishment as if that were disproportionable to his merits. Instead of justifying God in the sentence he condemns him, not accepting the punishment of his iniquity but quarrelling with it. Note, impenitent unhumbled hearts are therefore not reclaimed by God's rebukes, because they think themselves wronged by them; and it is an evidence of great hardness to be more concerned about our sufferings than about our sins. Pharaoh's care was concerning this death only, not this sin, *Exod. x. 17*. so was Cain's here. He is a living man, and yet complains of the punishment of his sin, *Lam. iii. 29*. He thinks himself rigorously dealt with, when really he is favourably treated, and cries out of wrong, when he has more reason to admire that he is out of hell. Wo unto him that thus strives with his Maker, and enters into judgment with his judge.

Now to justify this complaint, observe his descants upon the sentence. 1. He sees himself excluded by it from the favour of his God; and concludes, that being cursed, he was hid from God's face, and that is indeed the true nature of God's curse; damned sinners find it so, to whom it is said, *Depart from me ye cursed*. Those are cursed indeed that are for ever shut out from God's love and care, and from all hopes of his grace. 2. He sees himself expelled from all the comforts of this life; and concludes, That being a fugitive he was in effect *driven out this day from the face of the earth*. As good have no place on earth, as not have a settled place. Better rest in the grave than not rest at all. 3. He sees himself excommunicated by it, and cut off from the church, and forbidden to attend on public ordinances. His hands being full of blood, he must *bring no more vain oblations*, *Isa. i. 13, 15*. Perhaps this he means when he complains that he was *driven out from the face of the earth*, (for being shut out of the church which none had yet deserted, he was in effect chased out of the world) and that he was *hid from God's face*, being not admitted to come *with the sons of God to present himself before the Lord*. 4. He sees himself exposed by it to the hatred and ill-will of all mankind. *It shall come to pass, that every one that finds me shall slay me*. Wherever he wanders he goes in peril of his life, at least he thinks so; and like a man in debt thinks every one he meets a bailiff. There were none alive but his near relations, yet even of them he is justly afraid who had himself been so barbarous to his own brother. Some read it, *whosoever finds me shall slay me*, not only whosoever among men, but whosoever among all the creatures: seeing himself thrown out of God's protection, he sees the whole creation armed against him. Note, unpardoned guilt fills men with continual terrors, *Prov. xxviii. 1. Job xv. 20, 21. Psal. liii. 5*. It is better fear and not sin, than sin and then fear. Dr Lightfoot thinks this word of Cain should be read as a wish: *Now therefore let it be that any that finds me may kill me*. Being bitter in soul he *longs for death but it comes not*, *Job iii. 20, 21, 22*. As those under spiritual torments do, *Rev. ix. 5, 6*.

2. Here is God's confirmation of the sentence, for when he judges he will overcome, *ver. 15*. Observe,

1. How Cain is protected in wrath, by this declaration notified we may suppose to all that little world which was then in being, *whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold*; because thereby the sentence he was under, that he should be a fugitive and a vagabond, would be defeated. Condemned prisoners are under the special protection of the law; they that are appointed sacrifices to public justice must not be sacrificed to private revenge. God having said in Cain's case, *vengeance is mine, I will repay*, it had been a daring usurpation for any man to take the sword out of God's hand, a contempt put upon an express declaration of God's mind, and therefore avenged seven-fold. Note, God has wise and holy ends in protecting and prolonging the lives even of very wicked men. God deals with some according to that prayer, *Psal. lix. 11. Slay them not, lest my people forget, scatter them by thy power*. Had Cain been slain presently, he



he had been forgotten, *Eccl. viii. 10.* but now he lives a more fearful and lasting monument of God's justice, hanged in chains as it were.

2. How he is marked in wrath. *The Lord set a mark upon Cain*, to distinguish him from the rest of mankind, and to notify that this is the man that murdered his brother whom no body must hurt, but every body must hoot at. God stigmatized him as some malefactors are burnt in the cheek, and put upon him such a visible and indelible mark of infamy and disgrace, as would make all wise people shun him, so that he could not be otherwise but a fugitive and a vagabond, and the off-scouring of all things.

16. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. 17. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son Enoch. 18. And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

We have here a further account of *Cain*, and what became of him after he was rejected of God.

1. He tamely submitted to that part of his sentence by which he was hid from God's face. For *ver. 16. he went out from the presence of the Lord*, i. e. He willingly renounced God and religion, and was content to disdain it's privileges, so that he might not be under it's precepts. He forsook Adam's family, and altar, and cast off all pretensions to the fear of God, and never came among good people, nor attended on God's ordinances any more. Note, hypocritical professors that have dissembled and trifled with God Almighty, and justly left to themselves to do something that is grossly scandalous, and so to throw off that form of godliness which they have been a reproach to, and under colour of which they have denied the power of it. Cain went out now from the presence of the Lord, and we never find that he came into it again to his comfort. Hell is *destruction from the presence of the Lord*, 2 *Thes. i. 9.* It is a perpetual banishment from the fountain of all good. This is sinners choice, and so shall their doom be, to their eternal confusion.

2. He endeavoured to confront that part of the sentence by which he was made a fugitive and vagabond, for, 1. He chose his land. He went and *dwelt on the east of Eden*, some where distant from the place where Adam and his religious family resided, distinguishing himself and his accursed generation from the holy seed; his camp from the *camp of the saints, and the beloved city*, *Rev. xx. 9.* on the east of Eden, the cherubim was with the flaming sword, *chap. iii. 6.* there he chose his lot, as it were to defy the terrors of the Lord. But his attempt to settle was in vain, for the land he dwelt in was to him the land of Nod, i. e. of shaking, or trembling, because of the continual restlessness and uneasiness of his own spirit. Note, Those that depart from God cannot find rest any where else. When Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, he never rested after. Those that shut themselves out of Heaven abandon themselves to a perpetual trembling. *Return therefore to thy rest, O my soul, to thy rest in God, else thou art for ever restless.* 2. He built him a city for a habitation, *ver. 17. He was building a city*, so some read it, ever building it, but a curse being upon him and the work of his hands he could not finish it. Or as we read it, he *builded a city* in token of a fixed settled separation from the church of God, to which he had no thoughts of ever returning. This city was to be the head quarters of the apostacy. Observe here, 1. Cain's defiance of the divine sentence. God said he should be a *fugitive and a vagabond*, had he repented and humbled himself that curse might have been turned into a blessing, as that of the tribe of Levi was that they should be *divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel*; but his impenitent unhumbled heart walking contrary to God, and resolving to fix, in spite of Heaven, that which might have been a blessing turned into a curse. 2. See what was Cain's choice after he had forsaken God, he pitched upon a settlement in this world, as his rest for ever. They who looked for the heavenly city on earth, chose to dwell in tabernacles, but Cain as one that minded not that city, built him one on earth. They that are cursed of God are apt to seek their settlement and satisfaction here below, *Psal. xvii. 14.* 3. See what method Cain, took to defend himself against the terrors with which he was perpetually haunted. He undertook this building to divert his thoughts from the consideration of his own misery, and to drown the clamors of a guilty conscience with the noise of axes and hammers. Thus many baffle their convictions by thrusting themselves into a hurry of worldly business. 4. See how wicked people often get the start of God's people, and out-go them in outward prosperity. Cain and his cursed race dwell in a city, while Adam and his blessed family dwell in tents; we cannot judge of *love or hatred by all that is before us*, *Eccl. ix. 1, 2.*

3. His family also was built up. Here is an account of his posterity, at least the heirs of his family for seven generations. His son was Enoch, of the same name, but not of the same

character, with that holy man that *walked with God*, *chap. v. 22.* Good men and bad may bear the same names, but God can distinguish between Judas Iscariot, and Judas not Iscariot, *chap. xiv. 22.* The names of more of his posterity are mentioned; and but just mentioned, not as those of the holy seed, *chap. v.* where we have three verses concerning each, whereas here we have three or four in one verse. They are numbered in haste as not valued or delighted in, in comparison with God's chosen.

19. And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. 21. And his brothers name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. 22. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

We have here some particulars concerning Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain. Observe,

1. His marrying of two wives. It was one of the degenerate race of Cain who first transgressed that original law of marriage, that two only should be one flesh. Hitherto one man had but one wife at a time, but Lamech took two. From the beginning it was not so, *Mal. ii. 15. Matth. xix. 5.* See here, 1. That those who desert God's church and ordinances lay themselves open to all manner of temptation. 2. That when an ill custom is begun by ill men, sometimes men of better characters are through unweariness drawn in to follow them: Jacob, David, and many others, who were otherwise good men were afterwards ensnared in this sin which Lamech had began.

2. His happiness in his children notwithstanding this. Though he sinned in marrying two wives, yet he was blessed with children by both, and those such as lived to be famous in their generation, not for their piety, no mention is made of that, for ought appears they were the heathen of that age; but for their ingenuity. They were not only themselves men of business, but men that were serviceable to the world, and eminent for the invention, or at least the improvement, of some useful arts.

1. Jabal was a famous shepherd; he delighted much himself in keeping cattle, and was so happy in devising methods of doing it to the best advantage, and instructing others in them, that the shepherds of those times, nay, the shepherds of after-times called him Father; or perhaps his children after him being brought up to the same employment, the family was a family of shepherds.

2. Jubal was a famous Musician, and particularly an organist, and the first that gave rules for that noble art or science of Music. When Jabal had set them in a way to be rich, Jubal put them in a way to be merry. Those that spend their days in wealth, will not be without the trimbrel and harp, *Job xxi. 12, 13.* From his name Jubal probably the jubilee trumpet was so called; for the best Music was that which proclaimed liberty and redemption. Jabal was their Pan, and Jubal their Apollo.

3. Tubal-Cain was a famous Smith, who greatly improved the art of working in brass and iron, for the service both of war, and husbandry. He was their Vulcan. See here, 1. That worldly things are the only things that carnal wicked people set their hearts upon, and are most ingenious and industrious about. So it was with this impious race of cursed Cain. Here was a father of shepherds, and a father of Musicians, but not a father of the faithful: here is one to teach in brass and iron, but none to teach the good knowledge of the Lord. Here are devices how to be rich, and how to be mighty, and how to be merry, but nothing of God, or of his fear and service among them. Present things fill the heads of most people. 2. That even those who are destitute of the knowledge and grace of God, yet may be endued with many excellent useful accomplishments, which may make them famous and serviceable in their generation. Common gifts are given to bad men; while God chuseth to himself the foolish things of the world.

23. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. 24. If Cain shall be avenged seven-fold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold.

By this speech of Lamech, which is here recorded, and probably was much talked of in those times, he further appears to have been an ill man, as Cain's accursed race generally were.

Observe, 1. How haughtily and imperiously he speaks to his wives, as one that expected a mighty regard and observance. *Hear my voice ye wives of Lamech.* He that had broke the law of marriage in taking two wives, no marvel if he broke another law of that relation which obliged him to be kind and tender to those he had taken; and to give honour to the wife as to the weaker vessel. Those are not always the most careful to do their own duty that are most high in their demands of respect from others, and most frequent



frequent in calling upon their relations to know their place, and do their duty.

2. How bloody and barbarous he was to all about him. *I have slain*, or (as it is in the margin) *I would slay a man in my wound, and a young in my hurt*. He owns himself a man of a fierce and cruel disposition, that would lay about him without mercy, and kill and slay all that stood in his way; be it a man, or a young man, nay though he himself were in danger to be wounded and hurt in the fray. Some think because, ver. 24, he compares himself with Cain, that he had murdered some of the holy seed, the true worshippers of God, and this he acknowledges to be the wounding of his conscience, and the hurt of his soul, and yet like Cain he continues impenitent, trembling and yet unhumbled. Or, his wife's knowing what manner of spirit he was of, how apt both to give and to resent provocation, were afraid lest some-body or other would be the death of him, Never fear, saith he, I defy any man to set upon me; whoever doth, let me alone to make my part good with him; I will slay him, be he a man, or a young man. Note, It is a common thing for fierce and bloody men to *glory in their shame*, Phil. iii. 19. as if it were both their safety and their honour that they care not how many lives are sacrificed to their angry resentments, nor how much they are hated, provided they may be feared. *Oderint dum metuant*.

3. How impiously he presumes even upon God's protection in his wicked way, ver. 24. He had heard that *Cain should be avenged seven-fold*, ver. 15. i. e. that if any man should dare to kill Cain, he should be severely reckoned with and punished for so doing, though Cain deserved to die a thousand deaths, for the murder of his brother; and from hence he infers, that if any one should kill him for the murders he had committed, God would much more avenge his death. As if the special care God took to prolong and secure the life of Cain (for special reasons peculiar to his case, and indeed, for his sorer punishment, as the beings of the damned are continued) were designed for a protection to all murderers. Thus Lamech perversely argues, if God provided for the safety of Cain, much more for mine; who, though I have slain many, yet never slew my own brother, and upon no provocation as he did. Note, The reprieve of some sinners, and the patience God exerciseth towards them is often abused to the hardening of others in the like sinful ways, Eccl. viii. 11. But though justice strikes some slowly, others cannot therefore be sure but that they may be taken away with a swift destruction. Or if God should bear long with those who thus presume upon his forbearance, they do but hereby treasure up unto themselves *wrath against the day of wrath*. Now this is all we have upon record in scripture concerning the family and posterity of cursed Cain, till we find them all cut off and perishing in the universal deluge.

25. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed in stead of Abel, whom Cain slew. 26. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

This is the first mention of Adam in the story of this chapter. No question the murder of Abel, and the impenitency and apostacy of Cain were a very great grief to him and Eve, and the more because their own wickedness did now correct them, and their backslidings did reprove them. Their folly had given sin and death entrance into the world, and now they smarted by it, being by means thereof *deprived of both their sons in one day*, Gen. xxvii. 45. when parents are grieved by their children's wickedness, they should take occasion from thence to lament that corruption of nature which was derived from them, and which is the root of bitterness. But here we have that which was a relief to our first parents in their affliction.

1. God gave them to see the rebuilding of their family which was sorely shaken and weakened by that sad event. For, (1.) they saw their seed, *another seed instead of Abel*, ver. 25. Observe God's kindness and tenderness towards his people, in his providential dealings with them, when he takes away one comfort from them, he gives them another instead of it, which may prove a greater blessing to them than that was in which they thought their lives were bound up. This other seed was he in whom the church was to be built up and perpetuated; and he comes instead of Abel; for the succession of professors is the revival of the martyrs, and as it were the resurrection of God's slain witnesses: Thus we are *justified for the dead*, 1 Cor. xv. 29. i. e. we are by baptism admitted into the church, for or instead of those who by death, especially by martyrdom, are removed out of it, and we fill up their room. They who slay God's servants hope by that means to wear out the saints of the most high, but they will be deceived, Christ shall still see his seed, God can out of stones raise up children for him, and make the blood of the martyrs the seed of the church, whose lands we are sure shall never be lost for want of heirs. This son by a prophetic spirit they called Seth, i. e. set, settled, or placed, because in his seed mankind should continue to the end of time, and from him the Messiah should descend, while Cain, the head of the apostacy, is made a wanderer, Seth from whom the true church was to come is one fixed. In Christ and his

church is the only true settlement. (2.) They saw their *seed's seed*, ver. 26. *to Seth was born a son called Enos*, which is that general name for all men which speaks the weakness, frailty, and misery of man's state. The best men are most sensible of that both in themselves and their children. We are never so settled, but we must mind ourselves that we are frail.

2. God gave them to see the reviving of religion in their family, ver. 26. *then began men to call upon the name of the Lord*. It is small comfort to a good man to see his children's children, if he do not withal see peace upon Israel, and those that come of him walking in the truth. Doubtless God's name was called upon before, but now, 1. the worshippers of God began to stir up themselves to do more in religion than they had done, perhaps not more than had been done at first, but more than had been done of late since the defection of Cain. Now men began to worship God, not only in their closets and families, but in public and solemn assemblies. Or, now there was so great a reformation in religion that it was as if were a new beginning of it. Then may refer not to the birth of Enos, but to the whole foregoing story; then when men saw in Cain and Lamech the sad effects of sin by the workings of natural conscience, then when they saw God's judgments upon sin and sinners, then they were so much the more lively and resolute in religion. The worse others are, the better we should be, and the more zealous.

2. The worshippers of God began to distinguish themselves; so the margin reads it, *Then began men to be called by the name of the Lord*, or, to call themselves by it. Now Cain and those that had deserted religion had built a city, and begun to declare for impiety and irreligion, and called themselves the *Sons of men*, those that adhered to God began to declare for him and his worship, and called themselves the *Sons of God*. Now began the distinction between professors and profane, which has been kept up ever since, and will be while the world stands.

#### CHAP. V.

*This chapter is the only authentic history extant of the first age of the world from the creation to the flood, containing (according to the verity of the Hebrew text) 1656 years, as may easily be computed by the ages of the Patriarchs, before they began that son through whom the line went down to Noah. This is none of those which the apostle calls endless genealogies, 1 Tim. i. 4. for Christ was the end of the Old Testament law, was also the end of the Old Testament genealogies, towards him they looked, and in him they centred. The genealogy here recorded is inserted briefly in the pedigree of our Saviour, Luke iii. 36, 37. and is of great use to show that Christ was the seed of the woman, that was promised. We have here an account, 1. Concerning Adam, ver. 1—5. 2. Seth, ver. 6—8. 3. Enos, ver. 9—11. 4. Cainan, ver. 12—14. 5. Mahalalel, ver. 15—17. 6. Jared, ver. 18—20. 7. Ensch, ver. 21—24. 8. Methuselah, 25—27. 9. Lamech and his son Noah, ver. 28. ad fin. All scripture being given by inspiration of God is profitable, though not all alike profitable.*

1. **T**HIS is the book of the generations of Adam: In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him: 2. Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. 3. And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth. 4. And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years; and he begat sons and daughters. 5. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

The first words of the chapter are the title or argument of the whole chapter, it is *the book of the generations of Adam*, it is the list or catalogue of the posterity of Adam, not of all, but only of the *holy seed which were the substance thereof*, Isa. vi. 13. and of whom *as concerning the flesh Christ came*, Rom. ix. 5. The names, ages, and deaths, of those that were the successors of the first Adam in the custody of the promise, and the ancestors of the second Adam. The genealogy begins with Adam himself.

Here is, 1. His creation, ver. 1, 2. where we have a brief rehearsal of what was before at large related concerning the creation of man. This is what we have need frequently to hear of, and carefully to acquaint ourselves with. Observe here, (1.) that *God created man*. Man is not his own maker, therefore he must not be his own master, but the author of his being must be the director of his motions, and the centre of them. (2.) That there was a day in which God created man, he was not from eternity, but of yesterday; he was not the first-born but the junior of the creation. (3.) That God made him *in his own likeness righteous and holy*, and therefore undoubtedly happy; man's nature resembled the divine nature more than that of any of the creatures of this lower world. (4.) That God created them male and female, (ver. 2.) for their mutual comfort as well as for the preservation and increase of their kind. Adam and Eve were both made immediately by the hand of God, both made in God's likeness, and therefore between



the sexes there is not that great distance and inequality, which some imagine. (5.) That God blessed them; it is usual for parents to bless their children, so God, the common father, blessed his; but earthly parents can only beg a blessing; it is God's prerogative to command it. It refers chiefly to the blessing of increase, not excluding other blessings. (6.) That he called their name Adam. Adam signifies earth, red earth. Now, 1. God gave him this name: Adam had himself named the rest of the creatures, but he must not chuse his own name, lest he should assume some glorious pompous title. But God gave him a name which would be a continual memorandum to him of the meanness of his original, and oblige him to look unto the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged, Isa. li. 1. Those have little reason to be proud who are so near a-kirt to dust. 2. He gave this name both to the man and to the woman. Being at first one by nature, and afterwards one by marriage, it was fit they should both have the same name, in token of their union. The woman is of the earth earthy as well as the man.

2. The birth of his son Seth, ver. 3. He was born in the 130th year of Adam's life, and probably the murder of Abel was not long before. Many other sons and daughters were born to Adam besides Cain and Abel before this; but no notice is taken of them; because an honourable mention must be made of his name only, in whose loins Christ and the church were. But that which is most observable here concerning Seth is, that Adam begat him in his own likeness after his image; Adam was made in the image of God, but when he was fallen and corrupt he begat a son in his own image, sinful and defiled, frail and mortal, and miserable like himself; not only a man like himself, consisting of body and soul; but a sinner like himself, guilty and obnoxious, degenerate and corrupt. Even the man after God's own heart, owns himself conceived and born in sin, Psal. li. 5. This was Adam's own likeness, the reverse of that divine likeness in which Adam was made; but having lost it himself he could not convey it to his seed. Note, That grace doth not run in the blood, but corruption doth. A sinner begets a sinner, but a saint doth not beget a saint.

3. His age and death. He lived in all 930 years, and then he died, according to the sentence passed upon him, *in dust thou shalt return*. Though he did not die in the day he eat forbidden fruit, yet in that very day he became mortal; then he began to die, his whole life after was but a reprieve; a forfeited condemned life, nay it was a waiting dying life: he was not only like a criminal sentenced, but as one already crucified, that dies slowly and by degrees.

6. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos. 7. And Seth lived after he had begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. 8. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died. 9. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan. 10. And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters. 11. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. 12. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel. 13. And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years: and begat sons and daughters. 14. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died. 15. And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared. 16. And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. 17. And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died. 18. And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch. 19. And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 20. And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

We have here all that the Holy Ghost thought fit to leave upon record concerning five of the patriarchs before the flood, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared. There is nothing observable concerning any of those particularly, tho' we have reason to think they were men of eminency, both for prudence and piety in their day: but in general, 1. Observe how largely and expressly their generations are recorded. This matter, one would think, might have been delivered in fewer words; but, it is certain, there is never an idle word in God's books, whatever there are in mens: it is thus plainly set down, (1.) to make it easy and intelligible to the meanest capacity; when we are told how old they were when they begat such a son, and how many years they lived after, a very little skill in Arithmetic will enable man to tell how long they lived in all, yet the Holy Ghost sets down the sum total for the sake of those that have not even so much skill as that. (2.) To shew the pleasure God takes in the names of his people; we found Cain's generation numbered in haste, chap. iv. 18. but this account of the holy seed is enlarged upon, and given in words at length, and not in figures; we are told how long they lived

that lived in God's fear, and when they died that died in his favour; but as for others it is no matter: *The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.*

2. Their life is reckoned by days, ver. 8. all the days of Seth, and so of the rest; which intimates the shortness of the life of man; when it is at the longest, and the quick revolution of our times on earth: if they reckoned by days, sure we must reckon by hours, or rather make that our frequent prayer, *Psal. xc. 12: so teach us to number our days.*

3. Concerning each of them (except Enoch) it is said; *and he died*: it is implied in the numbering of the years of their life; that their life when those years were numbered and finished came to an end, and yet it is still repeated, *and he died*, to shew that death passed upon all men, without exception; and that it is good for us particularly to observe and improve the deaths of others for our own edification. Such a one was a strong healthful man, but he died; such a one was a great and rich man, but he died; such a one was a wise politic man, but he died; such a one was a very good man, perhaps a very useful man, but he died, &c.

4. That which is especially observable, is, that they all lived very long; not one of them died till he had seen the revolutions of almost eight hundred years, and some of them much longer; a great while for an immortal soul to be imprisoned in a house of clay. The present life surely was not to them such a burthen as commonly it is now, else they would have been weary of it; nor was the future life so clearly revealed then as it is now under the gospel; else they would have been impatient to remove to it: long life to the pious patriarchs was a blessing, and made them blessings. 1. Some natural causes may be assigned for their long life in those first ages of the world. It is very probable, that the earth was more fruitful, the products of it more strengthening; the air more healthful, and the influences of the heavenly bodies more benign, before the flood than they were after. Though man was driven out of paradise, yet the earth itself was then paradisiacal; a garden in comparison with it's present wilderness state: and some think, that their great knowledge of the creatures, and their usefulness both for their food and medicine, together with their sobriety and temperance, contributed much to it; yet we do not find, that those who were intemperate, as many were; *Luke xvii. 27.* were as short-lived as intemperate men generally are now. 2. It must chiefly be resolved into the power and providence of God; he prolonged their lives both for the more speedy replenishing of the earth, and for the more effectual preservation of the knowledge of God and religion, than when there was no written word, but tradition was the channel of it's conveyance: all the patriarchs here (except Noah) were born before Adam died, so that from him they might receive a full and satisfactory account of the creation, paradise, the fall, the promise; and those divine precepts which concerned religious worship, and a religious life: and if any mistake arose, they might have recourse to him while he lived; as to an oracle, for the rectifying of it, and after his death to Methuselah, and others that had conversed with him: so great was the care of Almighty God to preserve in his church the knowledge of his will, and the purity of his worship.

21. And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah. 22. And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 23. And all the days of Enoch, were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not: for God took him.

The accounts here run on for several generations without any thing remarkable, or any variation but of the names and numbers, but at length there comes in one that must not be passed over so, of whom special notice must be taken, and that is Enoch the seventh from Adam; the rest we may suppose did virtuously; but he excelled them all, and was the brightest star of the patriarchal age: it is but little that is recorded concerning him, but that little is enough to make his name great, greater than that of Enoch's, that had a city called by his name. Here are two things concerning him. (1.) His gracious conversation in this world, which is twice spoken of, ver. 22. *Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah*; and again, ver. 24. *Enoch walked with God*. Observe, 1. The nature of his religion, and the scope and tenor of his conversation, he walked with God; which notes, 1. True religion; What is godliness, but walking with God? The ungodly and prophane are without God in the world, they walk contrary to him, but the godly walk with God; which presupposes reconciliation to God, for two cannot walk together except they be agreed, Amos iii. 3. and includes all the parts and instances of a godly, righteous, and sober life: to walk with God, is to set God always before us, and to act as those that are always under his eye. It is to live a life of communion with God; both in ordinances and providences; it is to make God's word our rule, and his glory our end in all our actions; it is to make it our constant care and endeavour in every thing to please God, and in nothing to offend him; it is to comply with his will,



to concur with his designs, and to be workers together with him; it is to be *followers of him as dear children*. 2. Eminent religion. He was entirely dead to this world, and did not only walk after God, as all good men do, but he walked with God, as if he were in Heaven already: he lived above the rate, not only of other men, but of other saints; not only good in bad times, but the best in good times. 3. Activity in promoting religion among others; executing the priest's office is called *walking before God*, 1 Sam. ii. 30,—35. and see Zech. iii. 7. Enoch, it should seem, was a priest of the most high God, and as Noah, who is likewise said to walk with God, he was a preacher of righteousness, and prophesied of Christ's second coming, Jude 14. *Behold, the Lord comes with his holy Myriads*.

Now the holy spirit instead of saying, Enoch lived, faith, Enoch walked with God, for it is the life of a good man to walk with God. This was, (1.) the business of Enoch's life, his constant care and work, while others lived to themselves, and the world he lived to God. (2.) It was the joy and support of his life; communion with God was to him better than life itself, *to me to live is Christ*, Phil. i. 21.

2. The date of his religion. It is said, ver. 21. *he lived sixty-five years, and begat Methuselah*; but, ver. 22. *he walked with God after he begat Methuselah*; which intimates, that he did not begin to be eminent for piety, till about that time; at first he walked but as other men. Great saints arrive to their eminency by degrees.

3. The continuance of his religion; he walked with God three hundred years, as long as he continued in this world: the hypocrite will not pray always, but the real saint that acts from a principle, and makes religion his choice, will persevere to the end, and walk with God while he lives, as one that hopes to live for ever with him, Psal. civ. 33.

2. His glorious removal to a better world: as he did not live like the rest, so he did not die like the rest, ver. 24. *he was not, for God took him*; that is, as it is explained, Heb. xi. 5. *He was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him*. Observe, (1.) When he was thus translated. (1.) What time of his life it was when he had lived but three hundred sixty-five years, (year of years) which, as mens ages went then, was in the midst of his days; for there was none of the patriarchs, before the flood, that did not more than double that age: but why did God take him so soon? Surely, because the world, which was now grown corrupt, was not worthy of him; or because he was so much above the world, and so weary of it as to desire a speedy removal out of it; or because his work was done, and done the sooner for his minding it so closely. Note, God often takes them soonest whom he loves best; and the time they lose on earth is gained in Heaven, to their unspeakable advantage. (2.) What time of the world: it was when all the patriarchs mentioned in this chapter were living, except Adam, who died fifty-seven years before, and Noah who was born sixty-nine years after; they two had sensible confirmations to their faith other ways, but to all the rest who were or might have been witnesses of Enoch's translation, that was a sensible encouragement to their faith and hope, concerning a future state. (2.) How his removal is expressed, *He was not, for God took him*. 1. He was not any longer in this world; it was not the period of his being, but of his being here: he was not found, so the apostle explains it from the LXX, not found by his friends, who sought him as the *sins of the prophets sought Elijah*, 2 Kings ii. 17. not found by his enemies, who some think, were in quest of him to put him to death in their rage against him for his eminent piety; it appears by his prophecy, that there were then many ungodly sinners, who spoke hard speeches, and probably did hard things too against God's people, Jude 15. but God hid Enoch from them, not under Heaven; but in Heaven. 2. God took him body and soul to himself in the heavenly paradise, by the ministry of angels, as afterwards he took Elijah. He was changed as those saints shall be that will be found alive at Christ's second coming. Whenever a good man dies, God takes him, fetches him hence, and receives him to himself. The apostle adds concerning Enoch, that before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God, and this was the good report he obtained. Note, 1. Walking with God pleaseth God. 2. We cannot walk with God so as to please him, but by faith. 3. God himself will put an honour upon those that by faith walk with him, so as to please him. He will own them now, and witness for them before angels and men at the great day: they that have not this testimony before the translation yet shall have it after. 4. Those whose conversation in the world is truly holy, shall find their removal out of it truly happy: Enoch's translation was not only an evidence to faith of the reality of a future state, and of the possibility of the body's existing in glory in that state, but it was an encouragement to the hope of all that walk with God, that they shall be for ever with him; signal piety shall be crowned with signal honours.

25. And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech. 26. And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters. 27. And all the days of

Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

Concerning Methuselah observe, 1. The signification of his name, which some think was prophetic, his father Enoch being a prophet; Methuselah signifies, he dies, there is a dart, or, a sending forth, viz. of the deluge, which came the very year that Methuselah died. If indeed his name was so intended, and so explained it was fair warning to a careless world, a long time before the judgment came. However, this is observable; that the longest liver that ever was, carried death in his name, that he might be minded of it's coming surely, tho' it came slowly. 2. His age, he lived, nine hundred sixty-nine years, the longest we read of that ever any man lived on earth, and yet he died; the longest liver must die at last. Neither youth nor age will discharge from that war, for that is the end of all men: none can challenge life by long prescription, nor make that a plea against the arrests of death. It is commonly supposed, that Methuselah died a little before the flood, the Jewish writers say, seven days before, referring to chap. vii. 10. and that he was taken away from the evil to come; which goes upon this presumption which is generally received, that all these patriarchs in this chapter were holy good men; I am loth to offer any surmise to the contrary, and yet I see not that that can be any more inferred from their enrollment here among the ancestors of Christ, than that all those kings of Judah were so whose names are recorded in his genealogy, many of whom we are sure were much otherwise: and if this be questioned, it may be suggested as probable, that Methuselah was himself drowned with the rest of the world, for it is certain he died that year.

28. And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son. 29. And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. 30. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters. 31. And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. 32. And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Here we have the first mention of Noah of whom we shall read much in the following chapters: Here is,

1. His name, with the reason of it; Noah signifies rest, his parents gave him that name with a prospect of his being a more than ordinary blessing to his generation. *This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed*. Here is, 1. His complaint of the calamitous state of human life; by the entrance of sin, and the entail of the curse for sin, it is become very miserable: our whole life is spent in labour, and our time filled up with continual toil. God having cursed the ground, it is as much as we can do with the utmost care and pains to fetch a sorry livelihood out of it. He speaks as one fatigued, with the business of this life, and grudging that so many of our thoughts and precious minutes, which otherwise might have been much better employed, are unavoidably spent for the support of the body.

2. His comfortable hopes of some relief by the birth of this son; this same shall comfort us: which speaks not only that desire and expectation which parents generally have concerning their children, that when they grow up they will be comforts to them, and helpers in their business, though they often prove otherwise; but an apprehension and prospect of something more; very probably there were some prophecies that went before of him, as a person that should be wonderfully serviceable to his generation, which they so understood as to conclude, that he was the promised seed, the Messiah that should come: and then it intimates, that a covenant interest in Christ as ours, and the believing expectation of his coming, furnisheth us with the best and surest comforts, both in reference to the wrath and curse of God, which we have deserved, and to the toils and troubles of this present time, which we are oft complaining of: Is Christ ours? Is Heaven ours? This same shall comfort us.

(2.) His children, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. These Noah begat, (the eldest of these) when he was 500 years old. It should seem that Japheth was the eldest (chap. x. 21.) but Shem is put first, because on him the covenant was entailed, as appears by Gen. ix. 26. where God is called the *Lord God of Shem*, to him it is probable the birth-right was given, and from him it is certain both Christ the head, and the church the body, were to descend, therefore he is called Shem, which signifies a name, because in his posterity the name of God should always remain, till he should come out of his loins, whose name is above every name; so that in putting Shem first Christ was in effect put first, who in all things must have the pre-eminence.



## C H A P. VI.

*The most remarkable thing we have upon record concerning the old world, is the destruction of it by the universal deluge, which this chapter begins the story of; wherein we have, 1. The abounding iniquity of that wicked world, ver. 1—5. and ver. 11, 12. 2. The righteous God's just resentment of that abounding iniquity, and his holy resolution to punish it, ver. 6, 7. 3. The special favour of God to his servant Noah. 1. In the character given of him, ver. 8, 9, 10. 2. In the communication of God's purpose to him, ver. 13, 17. 3. In the directions he gave him to make an ark for his own safety, ver. 14, 15, 16. 4. In the employing of him for the preservation of the rest of the creatures, ver. 18, 19, 20, 21. Lastly, Noah's obedience to the instructions given him, ver. 22. And this concerning the old world is written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the new world are come.*

1. **A**ND it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them. 2. That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

For the glory of God's justice, and for warning to a wicked world before the history of the ruin of the old world we have a full account of it's degeneracy, it's apostacy from God and rebellion against him. The destroying of it was an act not of absolute sovereignty, but of necessary justice for the maintaining of the honour of God's government. Now here we have an account of two things which occasioned the wickedness of the old world.

1. The increase of mankind. *Men began to multiply upon the face of the earth.* This was the effect of the blessing, *Gen. i. 28.* and yet man's corruption so abused and perverted this blessing that it turned into a curse. Thus sin takes occasion by the mercies of God to be the more exceeding sinful. *Prov. xxix. 16. When the wicked are multiplied transgression increaseth.* The more sinners the more sin; and the multitude of offenders emboldens men: infectious diseases are most destructive in populous cities, and sin is a spreading leprosy. Thus in the New Testament church, *when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring,* *Acts vi. 1.* and we read of a nation that was multiplied, not to the increase of their joy, *Isa. ix. 3.* Numerous families have need to be well governed lest they become wicked families.

2. Mixed marriages, *ver. 2.* The sons of God, *i. e.* the professors of religion, who were called by the name of the Lord, and called upon that name, married *the daughters of men, i. e.* those that were prophane, and strangers to God and godliness. The posterity of Seth did not keep by themselves as they ought to have done, both for the preservation of their own purity, and in detestation of the apostacy, but intermingled themselves with the excommunicated race of Cain, *they took them wives of all that they chose*, but what was amiss in these marriages? 1. They chose only by the eye: *They saw that they were fair*, which was all they looked at. 2. They followed the choice which their own corrupt affections made, they took *all that they chose*, without advice and consideration. But, 3. That which proved of such ill consequence to them was that they *married strange wives, were unequally yoked with unbelievers*, *1 Cor. vi. 14.* This was forbidden to Israel, *Deut. vii. 3, 4.* it was the unhappy occasion of Solomon's apostacy, *1 King. xi. 1, 4.* and was of ill consequence to the Jews after their return out of Babylon, *Ezr. ix. 1, 2.* Note, professors of religion, in marrying both themselves and their children, should make conscience of keeping within the bounds of profession. The bad will sooner debauch the good than the good reform the bad. Those that profess themselves the children of God must not marry without his consent, which they have not, if they join in affinity with his enemies.

3. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

This comes in here, 1. as a token of God's displeasure at those who married strange wives; he threatens to withdraw his Spirit from them, whom they had grieved by such marriages, contrary to their convictions. Fleahly lusts are oft punished with spiritual judgments, the foret of all other. Or, 2. as another occasion of the great wickedness of the old world; the Spirit of the Lord being provoked by their resistance of his motions ceased to strive with them, and then all religion was soon lost among them. This he warns them of before, that they might not further vex his holy Spirit, but by their prayer might stay him with them. Observe in this verse,

1. God's resolution not always to strive with man by his Spirit. The Spirit then strove by Noah's preaching, *1 Pet. iii. 19.* and by inward checks, but it was in vain with the most of men, therefore saith God, *he shall not always strive.* Note, 1. The blessed Spirit strives with sinners, by the convictions and admoni-

tions of conscience, to turn them from sin to God. 2. If the Spirit be resisted, quenched and striven against, though he strive long he will not strive always, *Hos. iv. 17.* 3. Those are ripening apace for ruin, whom the Spirit of grace has left off striving with.

2. The reason of that resolution: *For that he also is flesh, i. e.* incurably corrupt and carnal and sensual, so that it is labour lost to strive with him; can the Ethiopian change his skin? He also, *i. e.* All, one as well as another, they are all sunk into the mire of flesh. Note, 1. It is the corrupt nature, and the inclination of the soul towards the flesh that opposeth the spirit's strivings, and renders them ineffectual. 2. When a sinner has long adhered to that interest, and sided with the flesh against the spirit, the spirit justly withdraws his agency, and strives no more. None lose the spirit's strivings but those that have first forfeited them.

3. A reprieve granted notwithstanding: yet *his days shall be 120 years*, so long I will defer the judgment they deserve, and gave them space to prevent it by their repentance and reformation: justice said, cut them down, but mercy interceded, *Lord, let them alone this year also*, and so far mercy prevailed, that a reprieve was obtained for six score years. Note, the time of God's patience and forbearance towards provoking sinners is sometimes long, but always limited: reprieves are not pardons; though God bear a great while he will not bear always.

4. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown. 5. And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

We have here a further account of the corruption of the old world, when the *sons of God* had matched with the *daughters of men*, though it was very displeasing to God; yet he did not presently cut them off, but waited to see what the product of these marriages would be, and which side the children would take after, and it proved (as usually it doth) that they took after the worse side.

Here is, 1. The temptation they were under to oppress and do violence, they were giants, and they were men of renown; they became too hard for all about them, and carried all before them, (1.) with their great bulk, as the sons of Anak, *Numb. xiii. 33.* and (2.) with their great name as the king of Assyria, *Isa. xxxvii. 11.* these made them the *terror of the mighty in the land of the living*; and thus armed, they daringly insulted the rights of all their neighbours, and trampled upon all that is just and sacred. Note, those that have so much power over others as to be able to oppress them, have seldom so much power over themselves as not to oppress; great might is a very great snare to many. This degenerate race slighted the honour their ancestors had obtained by virtue and religion, and made themselves a great name by that which was the perpetual ruin of their good name.

2. The charge exhibited and proved against them, *ver. 5.* The evidence produced was uncontestable, God saw it, and that is instead of a thousand witnesses. God sees all the wickedness that is among the children of men; it cannot be concealed from him now, and if it be not repented of, it shall not be concealed by him shortly. Now what did God take notice of. 1. He observed all the streams of sin, that flowed along in mens lives, and the breadth and depth of those streams, *He saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.* Observe the connection of this with what goes before; the oppressors were mighty men, and men of renown, and then God saw that the *wickedness of man was great.* Note, the wickedness of a people is great indeed, when the most notorious sinners are men of renown among them. Things are bad when ill men are not only honoured, notwithstanding their wickedness, but honoured for their wickedness, and the vilest men exalted, wickedness is then great, when great men are wicked. Their wickedness was great, *i. e.* abundance of sin was committed in all places, by all sorts of people: and those sins in their own nature most gross and heinous, and provoking: and committed daringly, and with a defiance of Heaven: and no care taken by those that had power in their hands to restrain and punish it. This God saw. Note, all the sins of sinners are known to God the judge: those that are most conversant in the world, though they see much wickedness in it, yet they see but little of that which is, but God sees all, and judges aright concerning it, how great it is, nor can he be deceived in his judgment. 2. He observed the fountain of sin that was in mens hearts: any one might see that *the wickedness of man was great*, for they declared their sin as Sodom, but God's eye went further, *he saw that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* A sad sight, and very offensive to God's holy eye! This was the bitter root, the corrupt spring: all the violence and oppression, all the luxury and wantonness that was in the world proceeded from the corruption of nature; lust conceives them, *Jam. i. 15.* see *Mat. xv. 19.* 1. The heart was naught; that



that was deceitful and desperately wicked; the principles were corrupt, and the habits and dispositions evil. 2. The *thoughts of the heart were so*: thought is sometimes taken for the settled judgment or opinion, and that was bribed and byassed and misled; sometimes for the workings of the fancy, and those were always either vain or vile, either weaving the spider's web, or hatching the cockatrice's Egg. 3. The imagination of the thought of the heart was so, *i. e.* their designs and devices were wicked. They did not do evil only through carelessness as those that walk at all adventures, not heeding what they do, but they did evil deliberately, and designedly contriving how to do mischief. It was bad indeed, for it was only evil, continually evil, and every imagination was so. There was no good to be found among them, no not at any time: the stream of sin was full and strong, and constant, and God saw it; see *Psal. xiv. 1, 2, 3.*

6. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7. And the LORD said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.

Here is, 1. God's resentment of man's wickedness. He did not see it as an unconcerned spectator, but as one injured and affronted by it; he saw it as a tender father sees the folly and stubbornness of a rebellious and disobedient child, which not only angers him but grieves him, and makes him wish he had been written childless. The expressions here used are very strange, *It repented the Lord that he had made man upon the earth*, that he had made a creature of such noble powers and faculties, and had put him on this earth, which he built and furnished on purpose to be a convenient, comfortable, habitation for him; *and it grieved him at his heart*. These are expressions after the manner of men, and must be understood so as not to reflect upon the honour of God's immutability or his felicity.

1. It doth not speak any passion or uneasiness in God, nothing can create disturbance to the eternal mind, but it speaks his just and holy displeasure against sin and sinners, against sin as odious to his holiness, and against sinners as obnoxious to his justice. He is pressed by the sins of his creatures, *Amos ii. 13. wearied, Isa. xliii. 24. broken, Ezek. vi. 9. grieved, Psal. xcv. 10.* and here grieved to the heart, as men are when they are wronged and abused by those they have been very kind to, and therefore repent of their kindness, and wish they had never fostered that snake in their bosom which now hisses in their face, and stings them to the heart. Doth God thus hate sin? and shall not we hate it? Hath our sin grieved him to the heart? And shall not we be grieved and pricked to the heart for it? O that this consideration might humble us, and shame us, and that we may look on him whom we have thus grieved, and mourn, *Zeck. xii. 10.*

2. It doth not speak any change of God's mind, for he is in one mind, and who can turn him, with him there is no variability, but it speaks a change of his way; when God had made man upright, *he rested and was refreshed, Exod. xxxi. 17.* and his way towards him was such as shewed him pleased with the work of his own hands, but now man was apostatized, he could not do otherwise but shew himself displeased; so that the change was in man, not in God. God repented that he had made man, but we never find him repenting that he redeemed man, though that was a work of much greater expence, because special and effectual grace is given to secure the great ends of redemption; so that *those gifts and callings are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29.*

3. God's resolution to destroy man for his wickedness, *ver. 7.* observe, 1. When God repented that he had made man he resolved to destroy man. Thus they that truly repent of sin will resolve in the strength of God's grace, to mortify sin, and to destroy it, and so to undo what they have done amiss; we do but mock God in saying we are sorry for our sin, and it grieves us to the heart if we continue to indulge it: In vain do we pretend a change of our mind, if we do not evidence it by a change of our way. 2. He resolves to destroy man: the original word is very significant, *I will wipe off man from the earth*; so some, as dirt or filth is wiped off from a place which should be clean, and is thrown to the dunghill, the proper place for it, see *2 King. xxi. 13.* Those that are the spots of the places they live in are justly wiped away by the judgments of God. *I will blot out man from the earth*, so others; as those lines are blotted out of a book, which displease the author; or, as the name of a citizen is blotted out of the rolls of the freemen when he is dead or disfranchised. 3. He speaks of man as his own creature then when he resolves upon his ruin, *Man whom I have created*; though I have created him, that shall not excuse him, *Isa. xxvii. 11. He that made him will not save him*; he that is our Creator, if he shall not be our ruler will be our destroyer. Or, because I have created him, and he hath been so undutiful and ungrateful to his Creator, therefore I will destroy him: those forfeit their lives that do not answer the end of their living. 4. Even the brute creatures were to be involved in this destruction, *Beasts and creeping things, and the fowl of the air.* These were made for

man, and therefore must be destroyed with man; for it follows, *It repenteth me that I have made them*, for the end of their creation also was frustrated, they were made, that man might serve and honour God with them, and therefore were destroyed, because he had served his lusts with them, and made them subject to vanity. 5. God took up this resolution concerning man, after his spirit had been long striving with them, in vain. None are ruined by the justice of God but those that hate to be reformed by the grace of God.

8. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9. These are the generations of Noah; Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

We have here Noah distinguished from the rest of the world, and a peculiar mark of honour put upon him.

1. When God was displeased with the rest of the world, he favoured Noah, *ver. viii. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.* This vindicates God's justice in his displeasure against the world, and shews that he had strictly examined the character of every person in it, before he pronounced it universally corrupt, for there being one good man he found him out, and smiled upon him. It also magnifies his grace towards Noah, that he was made a *vessel of God's mercy*, when all mankind besides were become the *generation of his wrath*: distinguishing favours are very obliging: probably Noah did not find favour in the eyes of men, they hated and persecuted him, because both by his life and preaching he condemned the world, but he found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and that was honour and comfort enough. God made more account of Noah than of all the world besides: and this made him greater and more truly honourable than all the giants that were in those days, who became mighty men, and men of renown. Let this be the top of our ambition, to *find grace in the eyes of the Lord*, herein let us labour, that present or absent we may be accepted of him, *2 Cor. v. 9.* Those are highly favoured whom God favours.

2. When the rest of the world was corrupt and wicked, Noah kept his integrity, *ver. 9. These are the generations of Noah.* This is the account we have to give of him, *Noah was a just man.* This character of Noah comes in here either, 1. As the reason of God's favour to him; his singular piety qualified him for singular tokens of God's loving kindness. Those that would find grace in the eyes of the Lord must be as Noah was, and do as Noah did: God loves those that love him: Or, 2. as the effect of God's favour to him; it was God's good will to him that produced this good work in him: he was a very good man, but he was no better than the grace of God made him, *1 Cor. xv. 10.* Now observe his character, 1. *He was a just man, i. e. justified* before God by faith in the promised seed; for he was an *Heir of the righteousness which is by faith*, *Heb. xi. 7.* He was sanctified, and had right principles and dispositions implanted in him: and he was righteous in his conversation, one that made conscience of rendering to all their due, to God his due, and to men theirs. Note, None but a downright honest man can find favour with God: that conversation which will be pleasing to God must be governed by *simplicity and godly sincerity*, not by *fleshly wisdom*, *2 Cor. i. 12.* God hath sometimes chosen the foolish things of the world, but he never chose the knavish things of it. 2. He was perfect, not with a sinless perfection, but a perfection of sincerity, and it is well for us that by virtue of the covenant of grace, upon the score of Christ's righteousness sincerity is accepted as our gospel perfection. 3. He walked with God as Enoch had done before him: he was not only honest but devout: he walked, *i. e.* he acted with God, as one always under his eye: he lived a life of communion with God: it was his constant care to conform himself to the will of God, to please him, and approve himself to him. Note, God looks down upon those with an eye of favour who sincerely look up to him with an eye of faith. But, 4. That which crowns his character is, that thus he was, and thus he did in his generation, in that corrupt degenerate age, in which his lot was cast. It is easy to be religious when religion is in fashion, but it is an evidence of strong faith and resolution to swim against a stream to Heaven, and to appear for God, when no else appears for him: so Noah did, and it is upon record to his immortal honour.

11. The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. 12. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

The wickedness of that generation is here again spoken of, (1.) as a foil to Noah's piety; he was just and perfect when all the earth was corrupt. Or, (2.) as a further justification of God's resolution to destroy the world, which he was now about to communicate to his servant Noah.

1. All kind of sin was found among them, for, *ver. 11. it is said that the earth was (1.) corrupt before God, i. e. in the matters of God's worship; either they had other gods before him, or worshipped*



worshipped him by images : Or, they were corrupt and wicked in despight and contempt of God, daring him and defying him to his face. (2.) *The earth was also filled with violence*, and injustice towards men ; there was no order nor regular government, no man was safe in the possession of that which he had the most clear and uncontestable right to, no not the most innocent life, nothing but murders, rapes, and rapines. Note, Wickedness, as it is the shame of the human nature, so it is the ruin of human society ; takes away conscience and the fear of God, and men become beasts and devils to one another, like the *fishes of the sea, where the greater devour the lesser*. Sin fills the earth with violence, and so turns the world into a wilderness, into a cock-pit.

2. The proof and evidence of it was undeniable, for *God looked upon the earth*, and was himself an eye-witness of the corruption that was in it, of which before, ver. 5. The righteous judge in all his judgments proceeds upon the infallible certainty of his own omniscience. *Psal. xxxiii. 13.*

3. That which most aggravated the matter was the universal spreading of the contagion, *All flesh had corrupted his way*. It was not some particular nations or cities that were thus wicked, but the whole world of mankind was so, there was none that did good, no, not one, beside Noah. Note, when wickedness is become general and universal, ruin is not far off, while there is a remnant of praying people in a nation to empty the measure as it fills, judgments may be kept off a great while, but when all hands are at work to pull down the fences by sin, and none stand in the gap to make up the breach, what can be expected but an inundation of wrath ?

13. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me ; for the earth is filled with violence through them : and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. 14. Make thee an ark of gopher-wood, rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of : the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above, and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof : with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. 17. And behold, I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven : and every thing that is in the earth shall die. 18. But with thee will I establish my covenant : and thou shalt come into the ark ; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee. 19. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee : they shall be male and female. 20. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind : two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. 21. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee ; and it shall be for food for thee and for them.

Here it appears indeed that Noah found *grace in the eyes of the Lord* : God's favour to him was plainly intimated in what he said of him, ver. 8, 9, 10. where his name is mentioned five times in five lines, when once might have served to make the sense clear, as if the Holy Ghost took a pleasure in perpetuating his memory : but it appears much more in what he saith to him in these verses, the informations and instructions here given him.

1. God here makes Noah the man of his council, communicating to him his purpose to destroy this wicked world by water : as afterwards he told Abraham his resolution concerning Sodom, chap. xviii. 17. *Shall I hide from Abraham*, so here, shall I hide from Noah *the thing that I do*, seeing that he shall become a great nation. Note, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*, *Psal. xxv. 14.* it was with his servants the prophets, (Amos iii. 7.) by a spirit of revelation, informing them particularly of his purposes, it is with all believers, by a spirit of wisdom and faith, enabling to understand and apply the general declarations of the written word, and the warnings there given.

Now, 1. God told Noah in general, that he would destroy the world, ver. 13. *The end of all flesh is come before me ; I will destroy them*, i. e. The ruin of this wicked world is decreed and determined ; *it is come*, i. e. it will come surely, and come quickly. Noah, it is likely, in preaching to his neighbours, had warned them in general of the wrath of God that they would bring upon themselves by their wickedness, and now God seconds it by a particular denunciation of wrath, that Noah might try if that would work upon them, whence observe, (1.) That God confirmeth the words of his messengers, *Isa. xlv. 26.* (2.) That to him that has, and useth what he has for the good of others, more shall be given, more full instructions,

2. He told him particularly, that he would destroy the world by a flood of waters, ver. 17. *And behold I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth*. God could have destroyed all mankind by the sword of an angel, a flaming sword turning every way, as he destroyed all the first-born of the Egyptians, and the camp of the Assyrians, and then there needed no more but to set a mark upon Noah and his family for their preservation, but God chose to do it by a flood of waters, which should drown the world. The reasons we may be sure were wise and just, but to us unknown. God has many arrows in his quiver, and he may use which he pleases : as he chuseth the rod with which he will correct his children, so he chuseth the sword with which he will cut off his enemies.

Observe the manner of expression, *I, even I, do bring a flood* ; I that am infinite in power, and therefore can do it, infinite in justice, and therefore will do it. (1.) It speaks the certainty of the judgment ; *I, even I, will do it* ; that cannot but be done effectually, which God himself undertakes the doing of ; see *Job xi. 10.* (2.) It speaks the tendency of it to God's glory, and the honour of his justice : thus he will be magnified, and exalted in the earth, and all the world shall be made to know that he is the God to whom vengeance belongs ; methinks the expression here is somewhat like that, *Isa. i. 24. Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries.*

2. God here makes Noah the man of his covenant, another Hebrew periphrasis of a friend, ver. 18. *But with thee will I establish my covenant*. (1.) The covenant of providence, that the course of nature shall be continued to the end of time, notwithstanding the interruption which the flood would give to it, this promise was immediately made to Noah and his sons, *Gen. ix. 8, &c.* They were as trustees for all this part of the creation, and a great honour was thereby put upon him and his. (2.) The covenant of grace, that God would be to him a God, and that out of his seed God would take to himself a people. Note, 1. When God makes a covenant he establisheth it ; he makes it sure, he makes it good ; his are everlasting covenants. 2. The covenant of grace has in it the recompence of singular services, and the fountain and foundation of all distinguishing favours ; we need desire no more either to make up our losses for God, or to make up a happiness for us in God, than to have his covenant established with us.

3. God here makes Noah a monument *sparing mercy*, by putting him in a way to secure himself in the approaching deluge, that he might not perish with the rest of the world, *I will destroy them* (saith God) *with the earth*, ver. 13. but make thee an ark, I will take care to preserve thee alive. Note, Singular Piety shall be recompensed with distinguishing salvations, which are in a special manner obliging. This will add much to the honour and happiness of glorified saints, that they shall be saved when the greatest part of the world is left to perish.

Now, 1. God directs Noah to make an ark, ver. 14, 15, 16. This ark was like the hulk of a ship, fitted not to sail upon the waters, there was no occasion for that when there should be no shore to sail to, but to float upon the waters, waiting for their fall. God could have secured Noah, by the ministration of angels, without putting him to any care or pains, or trouble himself, but he chose to employ him in making that which was to be the means of his preservation, both for the trial of his faith and obedience, and to teach us that none shall be saved by Christ, but those only that work out their salvation, we cannot do it without God, and he will not without us : both the providence of God, and the grace of God own and crown the endeavours of the obedient and diligent.

God gave him very particular instructions concerning this building, which could not but be admirably well fitted for the purpose, when infinite wisdom itself was the architect. 1. It must be made of gopher-wood ; Noah, doubtless, knew what sort of wood that was, though now we do not, whether cedar or cypress, or what other. 2. He must make it three stories within : And, 3. He must divide it into cabins, with partitions, places fitted for the several sorts of creatures, so as to lose no room. 4. Exact dimensions are given him, that he might make it proportionable, and might have room enough in it to answer the intention, and no more. Note, (1.) Those that work for God, must take their measures from him, and carefully observe them. (2.) It is fit that he who appoints us our habitation should fix the bounds and limits of it. 5. He must pitch it within and without ; without, to shed off the rain, and to prevent the water from soaking in ; within, to take away the ill smell of the beasts when kept close. Observe, God doth not bid him paint it, but pitch it. If God give us habitations that are safe and warm, and wholesome, we are bound to be thankful, though they are not magnificent or nice. 6. He must make a little window towards the top to let in light, and (some think) that through that window he might behold the desolations to be made in the earth. 7. He must make a door in the side of it, by which to go in and out.

2. God promiseth Noah, that he and his should be preserved alive in the ark, ver. 18. *then shalt come into the ark*. Note, What we do in obedience to God, we, ourselves, are likely to have the comfort and benefit of, *If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself*. Nor was he himself only saved in the ark, but his wife,



and his sons, and his sons wives. Observe, 1. The care of good parents, they are solicitous not only for their own salvation, but for the salvation of their families, and especially their children. 2. The happiness of those children that have godly parents: Their parents piety often procures them temporal salvation, as here; and it furthers them in the way to eternal salvation, if they improve the benefit of it.

4. God here makes Noah a great blessing to the world, and herein makes him an eminent type of the Messiah, though not the Messiah himself, as his parents expected, chap. v. 29.

1. God made him a preacher to the men of that generation. As a watchman, he received the word from God's mouth, that he might give them warning, *Ezek. iii. 17.* Thus while the long-suffering of God waited, by his spirit in Noah, he preached to the old world, who, when St Peter wrote, were *spirits in prison*, 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, 20. and herein he was a type of Christ, who, in a land and age wherein *all flesh had corrupted their way*, went about preaching repentance, and warning men of a deluge of wrath coming.

2. God made him a Saviour to the inferior creatures, to keep the several species of them from perishing and being lost in the deluge, ver. 19, 20, 21. This was a great honour put upon him, that not only in him the race of mankind should be kept up, and that from him should proceed a new world; the church, the soul of that world; and Messiah the head of that church; but that he should be instrumental to preserve the inferior creatures, and so mankind should in him acquire a new title to them and their service. 1. He was to provide shelter for them, that they might not be drowned: *two of every sort, male and female*, he must take with him into the ark, and lest he should make any difficulty of gathering them together, and getting them in, God promises (ver. 20.) that they should of their own accord come to him. He that makes the ox to know his owner and his crib, then made him know his preserver and his ark. 2. He was to provide sustenance for them, that they might not be starved, ver. 21. He must victual his ship according to the number of his crew, that great family which he had now the charge of, and according to the time appointed for his confinement. Herein also he was a type of Christ, to whom it is owing that the world stands, by whom all things consist, and who preserves mankind from being totally cut off and ruined by sin; in him the holy seed is saved alive, and the creation rescued from the vanity under which it groans. Noah saved those whom he was to rule, so doth Christ, *Heb. v. 9.*

22. Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

Noah's care and diligence in building the ark may be considered.

1. As an effect of his *faith in the word of God*: God had told him he would shortly drown the world, and he believed it, feared the threatened deluge, and in that fear prepared the ark. Note, We ought to mix faith with the revelation God has made of his wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; the threatenings of the word are not bug-bears. Much might have been objected against the credibility of this warning given to Noah: who could believe that the wise God, who made the world, should so soon unmake it again, who had drawn the waters off the dry-land, *Gen. i. 9, 10.* should cause them to cover it again? how would this be reconciled with the mercy of God, which is over all his works; especially that the innocent creatures should die for man's sin; whence would water be had sufficient to deluge the world? And, if it must be so, why should notice be given of it to Noah only? but Noah's faith triumphed over all these corrupt reasonings.

2. As an act of *obedience to the command of God*: had he consulted with flesh and blood, many objections would have been raised against it. To rear a building, such a one as he never saw, so large, and of such exact dimensions would put him upon a great deal of care, and labour, and expence: It would be a work of time, the vision was for a great while to come: his neighbours would ridicule him for his credulity, and he would be the song of the drunkards: his building would be called Noah's folly: if the worst came to the worst (as we say) he should fare as well as his neighbours. But these, and a thousand such objections, Noah by faith got over; his obedience was ready and resolute. Thus did Noah willingly and cheerfully without murmuring and disputing, God faith, do this, and he doth it: it was also punctual and persevering, he did all exactly according to the instructions given him, and having begun to build did not give off till he had finished it; so did he, and so must we do.

3. As an instance of wisdom for himself, thus to provide for his own safety: he feared the deluge, and therefore prepared the ark. Note, when God gives warning of approaching judgments it is our wisdom and duty to provide accordingly. See *Exod. ix. 20, 21.* *Ezek. iii. 9.* we must prepare to meet the Lord in his judgments on earth, flee to his name as a strong tower, *Prov. xviii. 20.* enter into our chambers, *Isa. xxvi. 21, 22.* especially prepare to meet him at death, and in the judgment of the great day, build upon Christ the rock, *Matth. vii. 24.* Come into Christ the ark.

4. As intended for warning to a careless world; and it was fair warning, of the deluge coming; every blow of his axes and hammers was a call to repentance, a call to them to prepare arks too. But since by it he could not convince the world, by it he condemned the world, *Heb. xi. 7.*

## C H A P. VII.

In this chapter we have the performance of what was foretold in the foregoing chapter, both concerning the destruction of the old world, and the salvation of Noah, for we may be sure that no word of God shall fall to the ground. There we left Noah busy about his ark, and full of care to get it finished in time, while the rest of his neighbours were laughing at him for his pains: Now here we see what was in the end thereof; of his care, and of their carelessness. And this famous period of the old world gives us some idea of the state of things when the world that now is shall be destroyed by fire, as that was by water. See 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7. We have in this chapter, 1. God's gracious call to Noah to come into the ark, ver. 1. and to bring the creatures that were to be preserved alive, along with him, ver. 2, 3. in consideration of the deluge at hand, ver. 4. 2. Noah's obedience to this heavenly vision, ver. 5. when he was 600 years old, he came with his family into the ark, ver. 6, 7. and brought the creatures along with him, ver. 8, 9. an account of which is repeated, ver. 13, 14, 15, 16; to which is added God's tender care, to shut him in. 3. The coming of the threatened deluge, ver. 10. the causes of it, ver. 11, 12. the prevalency of it, ver. 17, 18, 19, 20. 4. The dreadful desolations that were made by it in the death of every living creature upon earth, except what were in the ark, ver. 21, 22, 23. 5. The continuance of it in full sea, before it began to ebb, 150 days, ver. 24.

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. 2. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. 3. Of fowls also of the air, by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 4. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made, will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

Here is 1. A gracious invitation of Noah and his family into a place of safety, now the flood of waters was coming, ver. 1.

(1.) The call itself is very kind, like that of a tender father to his children, to come in a-door when he sees night or a storm coming, *Come thou and all thy house*, that small family that thou hast, *into the ark*. Observe, 1. Noah did not go into the ark till God bid him, tho' he knew it was designed for his place of refuge, yet he waited for a renewed command, and had it. It is very comfortable to follow the calls of providence, and to see God going before us in every step we take. 2. God doth not bid him go into the ark, but come into it, implying, that God would go with him, would lead him into it, accompany him in it, and in due time bring him safe out of it. Note, Wherever we are it is very desirable to have the presence of God with us, for that is all in all to the comfort of every condition. This was it that made Noah's ark, which was a prison, to be to him not only a refuge, but a palace. 3. Noah had taken a great deal of pains to build the ark, and now he was himself preserved alive in it. Note, what we do in obedience to the command of God, and in faith, we ourselves shall certainly have the comfort of first or last. 4. Not he only, but his house also, his wife and children are called with him into the ark. Note, It is good to belong to the family of a godly man; it is safe and comfortable to dwell under such a shadow. One of Noah's sons was Ham, who proved afterwards but an ill man, yet he was saved in the ark; which intimates, (1.) That wicked children often fare the better for the sake of their godly parents. (2.) That there is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies on earth, and we are not to think it strange: in Noah's family there was a Ham, and in Christ's family there was a Judas: there is no perfect purity on this side Heaven. 5. This call to Noah was a type of the call which the gospel gives to poor sinners: Christ is an ark already prepared, in whom alone we can be safe when death and judgment come; now the burthen of the song is, come, come; the word faith, come; ministers say, come; the spirit faith, come, come into the ark.

(2.) The reason for this invitation is a very honourable testimony to Noah's integrity, *For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation*. Observe, 1. Those are righteous indeed that are righteous before God, that have not only the form of godliness, by which they appear righteous before men, who may easily be imposed upon, but the power of it by which they approve themselves to God, who searcheth the heart and cannot be deceived in mens character. 2. God takes notice of, and is pleased with, those that are *righteous before him*; *thee have I seen*: In a world of wicked people God could see one righteous Noah; that single grain of wheat



wheat could not be lost, no not in so great a heap of chaff; *The Lord knows them that are his.* 3. God that is a witness to, will shortly be a witness for his peoples integrity: he that sees it will proclaim it before angels and men to their immortal honour. They that obtain mercy to be righteous, shall obtain witness that they are righteous. 4. God is in a special manner pleased with those that are good in bad times and places. Noah was therefore illustriously righteous, because he was so in that wicked and adulterous generation. 5. Those that keep themselves pure in times of common iniquity, God will keep them safe in times of common calamity; those that partake not with others in their sins, shall not partake with them in their plagues: those that are better than others, even in this life, are safer than others, and it is better with them.

2. Here is necessary orders given concerning the brute creatures that were to be preserved alive with Noah in the ark, *ver. 2, 3.* They were not capable of receiving the warning and directions themselves, as man was, who herein is taught *more than the beasts of the earth, and made wiser than the fowls of Heaven*, that he is endued with a power of prospect, therefore man is charged with the care of them; being under his dominion, they must be under his protection, and tho' he could not secure every individual, yet he must carefully preserve every species, that no tribe, no not the least considerable, might entirely perish out of the creation. Observe in this, 1. God's care for man, and for his comfort and benefit, we do not find that Noah was solicitous of himself about this matter, but God consults our happiness more than we do ourselves. Tho' God saw that the old world was very provoking, and foresaw that the new one would be little better, yet he would preserve the brute creatures for man's use: *Doth God take care for oxen?* 1 Cor. ix. 9. or was it not rather for man's sake that that this care was taken. 2. Even the unclean beasts were preserved alive in the Ark, that were least valuable and less profitable. For God's tender mercies are over all his works, and not only over those that are of most eminency and use. 3. Yet more of the clean were preserved than of the unclean. (1.) Because the clean were most for the service of man, and therefore in favour to him, more of them were preserved, and are still propagated: thanks be to God there are not herds of lions as there are of oxen, nor flocks of tygers as there are of sheep. 2. Because the clean were for sacrifice to God, and therefore in honour to him more of them were preserved, three couple for breed, and the odd seven for sacrifice, *chap. viii. 20.* God gives us six for one in earthly things, (as in the distribution of the days of the week) that in spiritual things we should be all for him. What is devoted to God's honour, and used in his service, is particularly blessed and increased.

3. Here is notice given of the now imminent approach of the flood, *ver. 4. yet seven days and I will cause it to rain.*

(1.) It shall be seven days yet, before I do it: after the 120 years were expired, God grants them a reprieve of seven days longer, both to show how slow he is to anger, and that punishing work is his strange work, and also to give them some further space for repentance: But all in vain, these seven days were trifled away after all the rest, they continued secure and sensual until the day that the flood came.

(2.) It shall be but seven days: while Noah told them of the judgment at a distance, they were tempted to put off their repentance, because the vision was for a great while to come, but now he is ordered to tell them, that it is at the door; that they have but one week more to turn them in, but one sabbath more to improve, to see if that will now at last awaken them to consider the things that belonged to their peace, which otherwise would soon be hid from their eyes. But it is common for those that have been careless of their souls during the years of their health, when they have looked upon death at a distance, to be as careless during the days, the seven days, of their sickness, when they see it approaching, their hearts being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

5. And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. 6. And Noah was six hundred years old, when the flood of waters was upon the earth. 7. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. 8. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth. 9. There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and female, as God had commanded Noah. 10. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

Here is Noah's ready obedience to the commands that God gave him. Observe 1. He went into the ark upon notice that that the flood would come after seven days, tho' probably as yet there appeared no visible sign of it's approach, no cloud arising that threatened it, nothing done towards it, but all, as yet, serene and clear; for as he prepared the ark by faith in the warning given that the flood would come, so he went into it by faith in this warning, that it would come quickly, tho' he did

not see that the second causes had yet begun to work. He walked by faith in every step he took, and not by sense. During these seven days it is likely he was settling himself and his family in the ark, and distributing the creatures into their several apartments, which was the conclusion of that visible sermon he had long been preaching to his careless neighbours, and one would think might have awakened them, but not obtaining that desired end, it left their blood upon their own heads. 2. He took all his family along with him, his wife to be his companion and comfort, tho' it should seem that after this he had no children by her: His sons, and his sons wives, that by them not only his family, but the world of mankind might be built up. Observe, Though men were to be reduced to so small a number, and it would be very desirable to have the world speedily repopled, yet Noah's sons were to have but each of them one wife, which strengthens the arguments against having many wives, for from the beginning of this new world it was not so: as at first God made, so now he kept alive but one woman for one man, see *Matth. xix. 4, 8.* 3. The brute creatures readily went in with him: The same hand that at first brought them to Adam to be named, now brought them to Noah to be preserved: the ox now knew his owner, and the ass his protector's crib, nay, even the wildest creatures flocked to it, but man was become more brutish, than the brutes themselves, and did not know, did not consider, *Ila. i. 3.*

11. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were open. 12. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

Here is, 1. The date of this great event; this is carefully recorded, for the greater certainty of the story, (1.) It was in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, which, by computation, appears to be 1656 years from the creation: the years of the old world are reckoned not by the reigns of the giants, but by the lives of the patriarchs; saints are of more account with God than princes: *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.* Noah was now a very old man, even as mens years went then. Note, 1. The longer we live in this world, the more we see of the miseries and calamities of it: it is therefore spoken of as the privilege of those that die young, that their eyes shall not see the evil which is coming, *2 King. xxii. 20.* 2. Sometimes God exercises his old servants with extraordinary trials of obedient patience. The oldest of Christ's soldiers must not promise themselves a discharge from their warfare till death discharge them. Still they must gird on their harness, and not boast as tho' they had put it off: and as the year of the deluge is recorded, so (2.) we are told that it was in the 2d, month the 17th day of the month, which is reckoned to be about the beginning of November; so that Noah had had a harvest just before, from which to victual his ark. 2. The second causes that concurred to this deluge: in the self-same day that Noah was fixed in the ark the inundation began. Note 1. Desolating judgments come not till God has provided for the security of his own people, see *Gen. xix. 22.* I can do nothing till thou be come thither, and we find, *Rev. vii. 3.* the winds are held till the servants of God are sealed. 2. When good men are removed, judgments are not far off, for they are *taken away from the evil to come*, *Ila. lvii. 1.* when they are called into their chambers, hid in the grave, hid in Heaven, then God is *coming out of his place to punish*, *Ila. xxvi. 20, 21.* Now see what was done on that day, that fatal day to the world of the ungodly. 1. The *fountains of the great deep were broken up.* Perhaps there needed no new creation of waters, what were already made to be in the common course of providence: blessings to the earth were now by extraordinary act of divine power made the ruin of it. God has laid up the deep in store-houses, *Psal. xxxiii. 7.* and now he broke up those stores. As our bodies have in themselves those humours, which, when God pleases, become the seeds and springs of mortal diseases; so the earth had in it's bowels those waters which at God's command sprung up and flooded it. God had, in the creation, set bars and doors to the waters of the sea, that they might not return to cover the earth, *Psal. civ. 9.* Job xxxviii. 9, 10, 11. and now he only removed those antient land-marks, mounds, and fences, and the waters of the sea returned to cover the earth, as they had done at first, *Gen. i. 9.* Note, All the creatures are ready to fight against sinful man, and any of them is able to be the instrument of his ruin, if God do but take off the restraints by which they are held in during the day of God's patience. 2. The *windows of heaven were opened*, and the waters which were above the firmament, were poured out upon the world; those treasures which God has reserved against the time of trouble, the day of battle and war, Job xxxviii. 22, 23. The rain which ordinarily descends in drops, then came down in streams, or spouts, as they call them in the Indies, where clouds have been often known to burst, as they express it there, when the rain descends in a much more violent torrent than we have ever seen in the greatest shower; we read, Job xxvi. 8. that *God binds up the waters in his thick clouds*, and the cloud is not rent under them; but now the bond was loosed, the cloud was rent, and such rains descended



descended as were never known before or since, in such abundance, and of such continuance: the thick cloud was not, as ordinarily it is, wearied with waterings, *Job xxxvii. 11. i. e.* soon spent and exhausted; but still the clouds returned after the rain, and the divine power brought in fresh recruits. It rained without intermission or abatement *forty days and forty nights*, ver. 12. and that upon the whole earth at once, not, as sometimes, *upon one city, and not upon another*. God made the world in six days, but he was forty days in destroying it, for he is slow to anger; but tho' the destruction came slowly and gradually, yet it came effectually. Now learn from this, 1. That all the creatures are at God's dispose, and he makes what use he pleaseth of them, whether *for correction, or for his land, or for mercy*, as Elihu speaks of the rain, *Job xxxvii. 12, 13.* 2. That God often makes that which *should be for our welfare to become a trap*, *Psal. lxxix. 22.* That which uses to be a comfort and a benefit to us, when God pleases, becomes a scourge and plague to us. Nothing more needful or useful than waters, both the springs of the earth, and the showers of Heaven, and yet now nothing more hurtful, nothing more destructive: every creature is to be what God makes it. 3. That it is impossible to escape the righteous judgments of God, when they come against sinners with commission: for God can arm both Heaven and earth against them, see *Job xx. 27.* God can surround men with the messengers of his wrath, so that if they look upward it is with horror and amazement, if they look to the earth, *behold trouble and darkness*, *Isa. viii. 21, 22.* who then is able to stand before God when he is angry. Lastly, In this destruction of the old world by water, God gave a specimen of the final destruction of the world that now is by fire; we find the Apostle setting the one of these over-against the other, *2 Pet. iii. 6, 7.* As there are waters under the earth, so *Ætna, Vesuvius*, and other volcano's proclaim to the world that there are subterraneous fires too, and fire often falls from Heaven, many desolations are made by lightning; so that when the time prefixed comes, between these two fires, the earth, and all the works therein, shall be burnt up, as the flood was brought upon the old world, out of the fountains of the great deep, and through the windows of Heaven.

13. In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark. 14. They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. 15. And they went in unto Noah in unto the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. 16. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

Here is repeated what was related before of Noah's entrance into the ark, with his family, and the creatures that were marked for preservation. Now, 1. It is thus repeated for the honour of Noah, whose faith and obedience herein shone so bright, by which he obtained a good report; and who herein appeared so great a favourite of Heaven, and so great a blessing to this earth. 2. Notice is here taken of the beasts going in after their kind, according to the phrase used in the history of the creation, *chap. i. 21, 24, 25.* to intimate, that just as many species as were created at first were saved now, and no more: and that this preservation was as a new creation; a life remarkably protected, is, as it were, a new life. 3. Tho' all enmities and hostilities between the creatures ceased for the present, and ravenous creatures were not only so mild and manageable as that the *wolf and the lamb lay down together*, but so strangely altered as that the *lion did eat straw like an ox*, *Isa. xi. 6, 7.* yet when this present occasion was over, the restraint was taken off, and they were still of the same kind as ever; for the ark did not alter their constitution. Hypocrites in the church that externally conform to the laws of that ark, may yet be unchanged, and then it will appear, one time or other, what kind they are after. 4. That which is here remarkably added, is, *ver. 16. that the Lord shut him in.* As Noah continued his obedience to God, so God continued his care of Noah, and here it appeared to be a very distinguishing care, for the shutting of this door, set up a partition wall, between him and all the world beside. God shut the door, (1.) to secure him, and keep him safe in the ark. The door must be shut very close, lest the waters should break in and sink the ark, and very fast lest any without should break it down. Thus *God made up Noah, as he makes up his jewels*, *Mal. iii. 17.* (2.) To seclude all others, and keep them for ever out. Hitherto the door of the ark stood open, and if any, even during the last seven days, had repented and believed; for ought I know they might have been welcome into the ark, but now the door was shut, and they were cut off from all hopes of admittance; for *God shutteth, and none can open.* 5. There is much of our gospel duty and privilege to be seen in Noah's preservation in the ark. The apostle makes it a type of our baptism, *i. e.* our Christianity, *1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.* Observe then,

1. It is our great duty in obedience to the gospel call, by a lively faith in Christ, to come into that way of salvation, which God has provided for poor sinners; when Noah came into the ark he quitted his own house and lands, so must we quit our own righteousness, and our worldly possessions, whenever they come into competition with Christ. Noah must for a while submit to the confinements and inconveniences of the ark, in order to his preservation for a new world; so those that come into Christ to be saved by him, must deny themselves, both in sufferings and services.

2. Those that come into the ark themselves should bring as many as they can in with them, by good instructions, persuasions, and a good example, *What knowest thou, O man, but thou mayest thus save thy wife*, *1 Cor. vii. 16.* as Noah did his: there is room enough in Christ for all comers.

3. Those that by faith come into Christ, the ark, shall by the power of God be shut in and kept as a strong hold *by the power of God*, *1 Pet. i. 5.* God put Adam into paradise, but he did not shut him in, and so he threw himself out: but when he put Noah into the ark, and so when he brings a soul to Christ, he ensures the salvation: it is not in our own keeping, but in the Mediator's hand.

4. The door of mercy will shortly be shut against those that now make light of it. *Now knock and it shall be opened*; but the time will come when it shall not, *Luke xiii. 25.*

17. And the flood was forty days upon the earth: and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. 18. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth: and the ark went upon the face of the waters. 19. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. 20. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

We are here told, (1.) How long the flood was increasing; *forty days*, ver. 17. The prophane world which believed not that it would come, probably when it came flattered themselves with hopes that it would soon abate, and never come to extremity, but still it increased, it prevailed.

Note, 1. When God judges he will overcome. If he begin he will make an end: his way is perfect, both in judgment and mercy. 2. The gradual approaches and advances of God's judgments, which are designed to bring sinners to repentance, are often abused to the hardening of them in their presumption. (2.) To what degree they increased. They rose so high, that not only the low flat countries were deluged, but to make sure work, and that none might escape, the tops of the highest mountains were overflowed fifteen cubits, *i. e.* seven yards and a half. So that *in vain was salvation hoped for, from hills or mountains*, *Jer. iii. 23.* None of God's creatures are so high, but his power can overtop them: and he will make them know that wherein they deal proudly, he is above them. Perhaps, the tops of the mountains were washed down by the strength of the waters, which helped much towards the prevailing of the waters above them; for it is said, *Job xii. 15. he sends out the waters*, and they not only overflow, but overturn the earth. Thus the refuge of lies was swept away, and the waters overflowed the hiding place of those sinners, *Isa. xxviii. 17.* and in vain they fly to them for safety, *Rev. vi. 16.* Now the mountains departed, and the hills were removed, and nothing stood a man in stead but the *covenant of peace*, *Isa. liv. 10.* There is no place on earth so high as to set men out of the reach of God's judgments, *Jer. xlix. 16. Obad. iii. 4.* God's hand will find out all his enemies, *Psal. xxi. 8.* Observe how exactly they are fathomed, fifteen cubits, not by Noah's plummet, but his knowledge who *weigheth the waters by measure*, *Job xxviii. 25.* (3.) What came of Noah's ark, when the waters thus increased; *it was lift up above the earth*, ver. 17. *and went upon the face of the waters*, ver. 18. when all other buildings were demolished by the waters, and buried under them, the ark alone subsisted. Observe, 1. The waters which broke down every thing else, bore up the ark. That which to unbelievers is a favour of death unto death, is to the faithful a favour of life unto life. 2. The more the waters increased, the higher the ark was lifted up towards Heaven. Thus sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions; and as troubles abound, consolations much more abound.

21. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. 22. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 23. And every living substance was destroyed, which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. 24. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.



Here is, 1. The general destruction of all flesh by the waters of the flood. *Come, and see the desolations which God makes in the earth*, Psal. xlv. 8. and how he lays heaps upon heaps. Never did death triumph so, from its first entrance, unto this day, as it did then. Come, and see death upon his pale horse, and hell following with him, *Rev. vi. 7, 8.* 1. All the cattle, fowl, and creeping things died, except the few that were in the ark. Observe how this is repeated, *all flesh died*, ver. 21. *All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was on the dry land*, ver. 22. *Every living substance*, ver. 23. And why so? Man only had done wickedly, and justly is God's hand against him, but *these sheep what have they done?* I answer, (1.) We are sure God did them no wrong, he is the sovereign Lord of all life, for he is the sole fountain and author of it. He that made them as he pleased might unmake them when he pleased, and who shall say unto him, *What doest thou?* *May he not do what he will with his own which were created for his pleasure.* (2.) God did admirably serve the purposes of his own glory by their destruction, as well as by their creation. Herein his holiness and justice were greatly magnified; by this it appears that he hates sin, and is highly displeased with sinners, when even the inferior creatures, because they are the servants of man, and part of his possession, and because they have been abused to be the servants of sin, are destroyed with him. This makes the judgment the more remarkable, the more dreadful, and consequently the more expressive of God's wrath and vengeance. The destruction of the creatures was their deliverance from the bondage of corruption, which now the whole creation groans after, *Rom. viii. 21, 22, 23.* It was likewise an instance of God's wisdom. As the creatures were made for man when he was made; so they were multiplied for him when he was multiplied, and therefore now mankind was reduced to so small a number, it was fit that the beasts should proportionably be reduced, otherwise they would have had the dominion, and would have replenished the earth, and the remnant of mankind that was left would have been overpowered by them. See how God considered this in another case, *Exod. xxiii. 29. Left the beast of the field multiply against thee.* 2. All the men, women, and children, that were in the world, (except what were in the ark) died. *Every man*, ver. 21. and ver. 23. and perhaps they were as many as are now upon the face of the earth, if not more. Now, 1. We may easily imagine what terror and consternation seized on them when they saw themselves surrounded. Our Saviour tells us, that till the very day that the flood came, they were *eating and drinking*, Luke xvii. 26. they were drowned in security and sensuality, before they were drowned in those waters: crying, peace, peace, to themselves; deaf and blind to all divine warnings. In this posture death surprized them, as *1 Sam. xxx. 16, 17.* But O what an amazement were they in then! Now they see and feel that which they would not believe and fear, and are convinced of their folly when it is too late; now they find no place for repentance, tho' they seek it carefully with tears. 2. We may suppose, that they tried all ways and means possible for their preservation, but all in vain. Some climb to the tops of trees or mountains, and spin out their terrors there a while. But the flood reaches them at last, and they are forced to die with the more deliberation. Some it is likely cling to the ark, and now hope that that may be their safety, which they had so long made their sport. Perhaps, some get to the top of the ark, and hope to shift for themselves there, but either they perish there for want of food, or a by speedier dispatch a dash of rain washes them off that deck. Others it may be, hope to prevail with Noah for admission into the ark, and pleaded old acquaintance, *Have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence?* Hast thou not taught in our streets? Yea, might Noah say, that I have many a time to little purpose. *I called but you refused, you set at naught all my counsel*, Prov. i. 24, 25. And now it is not in my power to help you, God hath shut the door, and I cannot open it. Thus it will be at the great day, *Matth. vii. 22.* climbing high in an outward profession will not bring men to Heaven, nor claiming relation to good people, *Matth. xxv. 8.* Those that are not found in Christ the ark are certainly undone, undone for ever: salvation itself cannot save them. See *Isa. x. 3.* 3. We may suppose, that some of those that perished in the deluge had themselves assisted Noah, or were employed by him in the building of the ark, and yet were not so wise as by repentance to secure themselves a place in it. Thus wicked ministers, tho' they may have been instrumental to help others to Heaven, will themselves be thrust down to hell.

Let us now pause a while and consider this tremendous judgment: let our hearts meditate terror, the terror of this destruction: let us see and say, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; who can stand before him when he is angry.* Let us see and say, *It is an evil thing, and a bitter to depart from God.* The sin of sinners will, without repentance, be their ruin first or last, if God be true it will. *Tho' hand join in hand, yet the wicked shall not go unpunished.* The righteous God knows how to bring a flood upon the world of the ungodly, *2 Pet. ii. 5.* Eliphaz appeals to this story as a standing warning to a careless world, *Job xxii. 15, 16.* *Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden, which were cut down out of time, and sent into eternity, whose foundation was overflown with a flood?*

2. The special preservation of Noah, and his family, ver. 23. *Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.* Observe, 1. Noah lives, when all about him were monuments of justice, thousands falling on his right hand, and ten thousands on his left, he was a monument of mercy, *only with his eyes might he behold and see the reward of the wicked*, Psal. xci. 7, 8. *In the floods of great waters they did not come nigh him*, Psal. xxxii. 6. We have reason to think, that while the long-suffering of God waited, Noah, not only preached to, but prayed for, that wicked world, and would have turned away the wrath; but his prayers return into his own bosom, and are answered only in his own escape; which is plainly referred to *Ezek. xiv. 14. Noa, Daniel, and Job, shall but deliver their own souls.* A mark of honour shall be set on intercessors. 2. He but lives. Noah remains alive, and that is all, he is in effect buried alive; cooped up in a close place, alarmed with the terrors of the descending rain, and increasing flood, and the shrieks and out-cries of his perishing neighbours, his heart overwhelmed with melancholy thoughts of the desolations made: but he comforts himself with this, that he is in the way of duty, and in the way of deliverance. And we are taught, *Jer. xlv. 4, 5.* That when desolating judgments are abroad we must not seek great or pleasant things to ourselves, but reckon it an unspeakable favour, if we have our lives given us for a prey.

## C H A P. VIII.

*In the close of the foregoing chapter we left the world in ruins, and the church in straits, but in this chapter we have the repair of the one, and the enlargement of the other. Now the scene alters, and another face of things begins to be presented to us, and the brighter side of that cloud which there appeared so black and dark; for tho' God contend long, he will not contend for ever, nor be always wroth. We have here, 1. The earth made anew, by the recess of the waters, and the appearing of the dry land, now a second time, and both gradual. (1.) The increase of the waters is stayed, ver. 1, 2. (2.) They begin sensibly to abate, ver. 3. (3.) After sixteen days ebbing the ark rests, ver. 4. (4.) After sixty days ebbing, the tops of the mountains appeared above water, ver. 5. (5.) After forty days ebbing, and twenty days before the mountains appeared, Noah began to send out his spies, a raven and a dove, to gain intelligence, ver. 6,—12. (6.) Two months after the appearing of the tops of the mountains the waters were gone, and the face of the earth was dry, ver. 13. tho' not dried so as to be fit for man till almost two months after, ver. 14. 2. Man placed anew upon the earth. In which, 1. Noah's discharge and departure out of the ark, ver. 15,—19. 2. His sacrifice of praise which he offered to God upon his enlargement, ver. 20. 3. God's acceptance of his sacrifice; and the promise he made thereupon not to drown the world again, ver. 21, 22. And thus at length mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

1. **A**ND God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged. 2. The fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. 3. And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

Here is, 1. An act of God's grace. *God remembered Noah, and every living thing.* This is an expression after the manner of men, for not any of his creatures, (*Luke xii. 6.*) much less any of his people are *forgotten of God*, *Isa. xlix. 15, 16.* But, (1.) The whole race of mankind, except Noah and his family was now extinguished, and gone into the *land of forgetfulness* to be remembered no more; so that God's remembering Noah was the return of his mercy to mankind, of whom he would not make a full end. It is a strange expression, *Ezek. v. 13. when I have caused my fury to rest upon them, I will be comforted*, the demands of divine justice had been answered by the ruin of those sinners; he had *eased him of his adversaries*, *Isa. i. 24.* and *now his spirit was quieted*, *Zech. vi. 8.* and *he remembered Noah, and every living thing. He remembered mercy in wrath*, *Hab. iii. 2.* remembered the days of old, *Isa. lxiii. 11.* remembered the holy seed, and then remembered Noah. (2.) Noah himself, though one that had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, yet seemed to be forgotten in the ark, and perhaps began to think himself so, for we do not find that God had told him how long he should be confined, and when he should be released. Very good men have sometimes been ready to conclude themselves forgotten of God, especially when their afflictions have been more than ordinary grievous and long. Noah, though a great believer, yet when he found the flood continuing so long after it might reasonably be presumed to have done its work, perhaps was tempted to fear lest he that shut him in would keep him in, and began to expostulate. How long wilt thou forget me? But at length God returned in mercy to him, and that is expressed by his remembering him. Note, those that remember God shall certainly be remembered by him, how desolate



late and disconsolate forever their condition may be. He will *appoint them a set time and remember them*, Job xiv. 13. (3.) With Noah God remembered every living thing, for though his delight be especially in the sons of men yet he rejoiceth in all his works and hateth nothing that he has made. He takes special care not only of his peoples persons but of their possessions; of them and all that belongs to them. He considered the cattle of Nineveh, *Jon. iv. 11.*

2. An act of God's power, over wind and water, neither of which are under man's controul, but both at his beck. Observe, 1. He commanded the wind, and said to that, go, and it went, in order to the carrying off of the flood. *God made a wind to pass over the earth.* See here, 1. What was God's remembrance of Noah, it was his relieving him. Note, those whom God remembers, he remembers effectually for good; he remembers us to save us, that we may remember to serve him. 2. What a sovereign dominion God has over the winds. He hath them in his fist, *Prov. xxx. 4.* and brings them out of his treasure, *Psal. cxxxv. 7.* He sends them when and whither, and for what purposes he pleaseth. Even stormy winds fulfil his word, *Psal. cxlviii. 8.* It should seem while the waters increased there was no wind, for that would have added to the toils of the ark, but now God sent a wind when it would not be so troublesome. Probably it was a north wind, for that drives away rain. However it was a drying wind, such a wind as God sent to divide the Red-Sea before Israel, *Exod. xiv. 21.*

2. He remanded the waters, and said to them, come, and they came. 1. *He took away the cause.* He sealed up the springs of those waters, the *fountains of the great deep, and the windows of heaven.* Note, 1. As God has a key to open, so he has a key to shut up again, and to stay the progress of judgments by stopping the causes of them. And the same hand that brings the desolation must bring the deliverance; to that hand therefore our eye must ever be. He that wounds is alone able to heal. See *Job xii. 14, 15.* 2. When afflictions have done the work for which they are sent, whether killing work, or curing work, they shall be removed. God's word shall not return void, *Isa. lv. 10, 11.* 2. Then the effect ceased, not all at once but by degrees. The waters asswaged, *ver. 1. returned from off the earth continually,* *ver. 3.* Hebr. they were *going and returning*; which notes a gradual departure. The heat of the sun exhales much, and perhaps the subterraneous caverns soaked in more. Note, as the earth was not drowned in a day, so it was not dried in a day. In the creation it was but one day's work to clear the earth from the waters that covered it, and to make it dry land, nay it was but half a day's work, *Gen. i. 9, 10.* But the work of creation being finished, this work of providence was effected by the concurring influence of second causes, yet thus enforced by the almighty power of God. God usually works deliverance for his people gradually, that the day of small things may not be despised, nor the day of great things despaired of, *Zech. iv. 10.* See *Prov. iv. 18.*

4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. 5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

Here we have the effects and evidences of the ebbing of the waters. 1. The ark rested. This was some satisfaction to Noah, to feel the house he was in upon firm ground, and no longer moveable. It rested upon a mountain, whither it was directed, not by Noah's prudence, he did not steer it, but by the wise and gracious providence of God, that it might rest the sooner. Note, God has times and places of rest for his people after their tossings: and many a time he provides for their seasonable and comfortable settlement without their own contrivance, and quite beyond their own foresight. The ark of the church though sometimes tossed with tempests, and not comforted, *Isa. liv. 11.* yet it has its rests, *Acts ix. 31.*

2. The tops of the mountains were seen, like little islands, appearing above the water. We must suppose that they were seen to Noah and his sons, for there were no other to see them; it is likely they had looked through the window of the ark every day, like the longing mariners after a tedious voyage, to see if they could discover land, or as the prophet's servant, *1 King. xviii. 43.* and at length they spy ground, and enter the day of the discovery in their journal. They felt ground above forty days before they saw it, according to Dr Lightfoot's computation, whence he infers that if the waters decreased proportionably, the ark drew eleven cubits in water.

6. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. 7. And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. 8. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground. 9. But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark: for the waters were on the

face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 10. And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark. 11. And the dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 12. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

We have here an account of the spies which Noah sent forth to bring him intelligence from abroad, a raven and a dove. Observe here, 1. That though God had told Noah particularly when the flood would come, even to a day, chap. vii. 4. yet he did not give him a particular account by revelation at what times and by what steps it should go away. (1.) Because the knowledge of the former was necessary to his preparing the ark, and settling himself in it; but the knowledge of the latter would only serve to gratify his curiosity, and the concealing of it from him would be the needful exercise of his faith and patience. And, (2.) He could not foresee the flood but by revelation, but he might by ordinary means discover the decrease of it, and therefore God was pleased to leave him to the use of them. 2. That though Noah by faith expected his enlargement, and by patience waited for it, yet he was inquisitive concerning it, as one that thought it long to be thus confined. Note, desires of release out of trouble; earnest expectations of it, and enquiries concerning its advances towards us, will very well consist with the sincerity of faith and patience. *He that believes doth not make haste,* to run before God, but he doth make haste to go forth to meet him, *Isa. xxviii. 16.* Particularly, 1. Noah sent forth a raven through the window of the ark which went forth, as the Hebrew phrase is, *going forth and returning, i. e. flying about,* and feeding on the carcases that floated, but returning to the ark for rest; probably not in it, but upon it. This gave Noah little satisfaction; therefore, 2. He sent forth a dove, which returned the first time with no good news, but probably wet and dirty; but the second time she brought an olive leaf in her bill, which appeared to be first plucked off, a plain indication that now the trees, the fruit trees began to appear above water. Note here, 1. That Noah sent forth the dove the second time, seven days after the first time, and the third time was after seven days too: and probably the first sending of her out was seven days after the sending forth of the raven, which intimates that it was done on the sabbath-day, which it should seem Noah religiously observed in the ark. Having kept the sabbath in a solemn assembly of his little church, he then expected special blessings from Heaven, and enquired concerning them. Having *directed his prayer he looked up*, *Psal. v. 3.* 2. The dove is an emblem of a gracious soul, that finding no rest for its foot, no solid peace or satisfaction in this world, this deluged, defiling world returns to Christ as to its ark, as to its Noah. The carnal heart like the raven takes up with the world, and feeds on the carrions it finds there, but *return thou to thy rest O my soul,* to thy Noah, so the word is, *Psal. cxvi. 7.* *O that I had wings like a dove to flee to him,* *Psal. lv. 6.* And as Noah put forth his hand, and took the dove and pulled her into him, into the ark, so Christ will graciously preserve and help, and welcome those that fly to him for rest. 3. The olive branch which was an emblem of peace was brought not by the raven a bird of prey, nor by a gay and proud peacock, but by a mild, patient, humble dove. It is a dove-like disposition that brings into the soul earnestness of rest and joy. 4. Some make these things an allegory. The law was first sent forth like the raven but brought no tidings of the asswaging of the waters of God's wrath, with which the world of mankind was deluged, therefore in the fulness of time God sent forth his gospel, as the dove, in the likeness of which the holy Spirit descended, and this presents us with an olive-branch, and brings in a better hope.

13. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry. 14. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

Hereis, 1. The ground dry, *ver. 14. i. e.* all the water carried off it, which upon the first day of the first month (a joyful new-years-day it was) Noah was himself an eye-witness of. He removed the covering of the ark, not the whole covering, but so much as would suffice to give him a prospect of the earth about it, and a most comfortable prospect he had. For behold, behold and wonder, *the face of the ground was dry.* Note, (1.) It is a great mercy to see dry ground about us. Noah was more sensible of it than we are, for mercies restored are much more affecting than mercies continued. (2.) The divine power which now renewed the face of the earth, can renew the face of an afflicted, troubled soul, and of a distressed persecuted church. He can make dry ground



ground to appear there where it seemed to have been lost and forgotten, *Psal. xviii. 16.*

2. The ground dried, ver. 14. so as to be a fit habitation for Noah. Observe, though Noah saw the ground dry the first day of the first month, yet God would not suffer him to go out of the ark till the twenty-seventh day of the second month. Perhaps Noah being somewhat weary of his restraint would have quitted the ark at first, but God, in kindness to him, ordered him to stay so much longer. Note, God consults our benefit, rather than our desires: for he knows what is good for us better than we do for ourselves, and how long it is fit our restraints should continue, and desired mercies should be delayed. We would go out of the ark before the ground is dried; and perhaps if the door be shut, are ready to remove the covering, and to climb up some other way; but we should be satisfied that God's time of shewing mercy is certainly the best time, when the mercy is ripe for us, and we are ready for it.

15. And God spake unto Noah, saying, 16. Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons wives with thee. 17. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. 18. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons wives with him: 19. Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

Here is, 1. Noah's dismissal out of the ark, ver. 15, 16, 17. Observe, (1.) Noah did not stir till God bid him. As he had a command to go into the ark, chap. vii. 1. so (how tedious soever his confinement there was) he would wait for a command to go out of it again. Note, we must in all our ways acknowledge God, and set him before us in all our removes. Those only go under God's protection that follow God's conduct, and submit to his government. Those that steadily adhere to God's word as their rule, and are guided by his grace as their principle, and take hints from his providence to assist them in their application of general directions to particular cases, may in faith see him guiding their motions in their march through this wilderness. (2.) Though God detained him long, yet at last he gave him his discharge, for *the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, it shall speak truth*, Hab. ii. 3. it shall not lie. (3.) God had said come into the ark, which intimated that God went in with him, and here not come forth, but go forth, which intimates that God who went in with him, stands with him all the while till he sent him out safe; for he hath said, *I will not leave thee*. (4.) Some observe that when they were ordered into the ark, the men and the women were mentioned separately, chap. vi. 18. *Thou and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives*, whence they infer that during that time of mourning they were apart, and their wives apart, *Zech. xii. 12.* But now God did as it were new marry them, sending out Noah and his wife together, and his sons and their wives together, that they might be fruitful and multiply. (5.) Noah is ordered to bring the creatures out with him; that having taken the care of feeding them so long, and been at so much pains about them, he might have the honour of leading them forth by their armies, and receiving their homage.

2. Noah's departure when he had his dismissal. As he would not go out without leave, so he would not out of fear, or humour stay in when he had leave, but was in all points observant of the heavenly vision. Though he had been now a full year and ten days a prisoner in the ark, yet when he found himself preserved there, not only for a new life, but for a new world, he saw no reason to complain of his long confinement. Now Observe, 1. Noah and his family came out alive, though one of them was a wicked Ham, whom though he escaped the flood, God's justice could have taken away by some other stroke. But they are all alive. Note, when families have been long continued together, and no breaches made upon them, it must be looked upon as a distinguishing favour, and attributed to the Lord's mercies. 2. Noah brought out all the creatures that went in with him, except the raven and the dove who probably were ready to meet their mates, at their coming out. Noah was able to give a very good account of his charge, for of all that were given him he had lost none, but was faithful to him that appointed him, *pro hac vice*, high steward of his household.

20. And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. 21. And the LORD smelled a sweet savour, and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every thing living,

as I have done. 22. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Here is, 1. Noah's thankful acknowledgment of God's favour to him, in completing the mercy of his deliverance, ver. 20.

1. He *built an altar*. Hitherto he had done nothing without particular instructions and commands from God. He had a particular call into the ark, and another out of it, but altars and sacrifices being already of divine institution for religious worship, he did not stay for a particular command thus to express his thankfulness. Those that have received mercy from God should be forward in returning thanks; and do it *not of constraint but willingly*. God is pleased with free-will offerings, and praises that wait for him. Noah was now turned out into a cold and desolate world, where one would have thought his first care would have been to build a house for himself; but behold he begins with an altar for God: God that is the first, must be first served, and he begins well that begins with God.

2. He *offered a sacrifice* upon his altar, *of every clean beast and of every clean fowl one*, the odd seventh that we read of, chap. vii. 2, 3.

Here observe, 1. He offered only those that were clean, for it is not enough that we sacrifice, but we must sacrifice that which God appoints, according to the law of sacrifice, and not a corrupt thing. 2. Though his stock of cattle was so small, and that rescued from ruin at so great an expence of care and pains, yet he did not grudge to give God his dues out of it. He might have said, Have I but seven sheep to begin the world with, and must one of those seven be killed and burnt for sacrifice, were it not better to defer it, till we have more plenty? No, to prove the sincerity of his love and gratitude, he cheerfully gives the seventh to his God, as an acknowledgment that all was his, and owing to him. Serving God with our little is the way to make it more. And we must never think that wasted with which God is honoured. 3. See here the antiquity of religion: The first thing we find done in the new world was an act of worship, *Jer. vi. 16.* We are not now to express our thankfulness by burnt-offerings, but by the sacrifices of praise, and the sacrifices of righteousness, pious devotions, and a pious conversation.

2. God's gracious acceptance of Noah's thankfulness. It was a settled rule in the patriarchal age; *If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?* Noah was so. For, 1. God was well pleased with the performance, ver. 21. *He smelled a sweet savour, or a savour of rest* from it; as it is in the Hebrew. As when he had made the world at first on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed, so now he had new-made it, in the sacrifice of the seventh he rested. He was well-pleased with Noah's pious zeal, and these hopeful beginnings of the new world, as men are with fragrant and agreeable smells; though his offering was small it was according to his ability, and God accepted it. Having caused his anger to rest upon the world of sinners, he here causeth his love to rest upon this little remnant of believers. 2. Hereupon he took up a resolution never to drown the world again. Herein he had an eye not so much to Noah's sacrifice, as to Christ's sacrifice of himself, which was typified and represented by it, and which was indeed an *offering of a sweet smelling savour*, Eph. v. 2. Good security is here given, and that which may be relied upon. 1. That this judgment should never be repeated. Noah might think, to what purpose should the world be repaired, when, in all probability, for the wickedness of it, it will quickly be in like manner ruined again: No, saith God, it never shall. It was said, chap. vi. 6. *It repented the Lord that he had made man*. Now here he speaks as if it repented him that he had destroyed man; neither means a change of his mind, but both a change of his way. *It repenteth him concerning his servants*, Deut. xxxii. 36. Two ways this resolve is expressed, (1.) *I will not again curse the ground*, Hebr. *I will not add to curse the ground any more*. God had cursed the ground upon the first entrance of sin, chap. iii. 17. when he drowned it he added to that curse: but now he determines not to add to it any more. (2.) *Neither will I again smite any more every living thing*, i. e. It was determined that whatever ruin God might bring upon particular persons, families, or countries, he would never again destroy the whole world till the day shall come when time shall be no more. But the reason of this resolve is very surprising, for it seems the same in effect with the reason given for the destruction of the world, chap. vi. 5. *Because the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*. But there is this difference; there it is said, the imagination of man's heart is evil continually, i. e. his actual transgressions continually cry against him; here it is said, that this evil *from his youth or childhood*. It is bred in the bone, he brought it into the world with him, he was shapen and conceived in it. Now, one would think it should follow, therefore that guilty race shall be wholly extinguished, and *I will make a full end*: No: therefore I will no more take this severe method for, (1.) He is rather to be pitied, for it is all the effect of sin dwelling in him. And it is but what might be expected from such a degenerate race: he is called a *transgressor from the womb*, and therefore it is not strange he deals so very treacherously, *Isa. xlvi. 8.* Thus God *remembers that he is flesh*, corrupt and sinful, *Psal. lxxviii.*



lxxviii. 39. (2.) He will be utterly ruined, for if he be dealt with according to his deserts, one flood must succeed another 'till all be destroyed. See here, 1. That outward judgments though they may terrify and restrain men, yet cannot of themselves sanctify and renew them, without the grace of God working with them. Man's nature was as sinful after the deluge as it had been before. 2. That God's goodness takes occasion from man's badness to magnify itself the more; his reasons of mercy are all drawn from himself, not from any thing in us. 2. That the *course of nature* should never be discontinued, ver. 22. *while the earth remaineth*, and man upon it, there shall be *summer and winter*, not all winter as had been this last year, *day and night*, not all night, as probably it was while the rain was descending. Here, 1. It is plainly intimated that this earth is not to remain always; it, and all the works in it, must shortly be burnt up, and we look for *new Heavens and a new earth*, when all these things must be dissolved. But, (2.) As long as it doth remain, God's providence will carefully preserve the regular succession of times and seasons, and cause each to know their place. To this we owe it, that the world stands, and the wheel of nature keeps its track. See here how changeable the times are, and yet how unchangeable. 1. The course of nature always changing. As it is with the times so it is with the events of time, they are subject to vicissitudes *day and night*, *summer and winter* countercharged. In Heaven and hell it is not so, but on earth *God hath set the one over against the other*. 2. Yet *never changed*; it is constant in this inconstancy; these seasons have never ceased, nor shall cease while the sun continues such a steady measure of time, and the moon such a *faithful witness in Heaven*. This is *God's covenant of the day and of the night*, the stability of which is mentioned for the confirming of our faith in the covenant of grace, which is no less inviolable, *Jer. xxxiii. 20.* we see God's promises to the creatures made good, and thence may infer that his promises to all believers shall be so.

## C H A P. IX.

*Both the world and the church were now again reduced to a family, the family of Noah, of the affairs of which this chapter gives us an account, which we are the more concerned to take cognizance of, because from this family we all are descendants. Here is, 1. The covenant of providence settled with Noah and his sons, ver. 1—11. In this covenant, 1. God promiseth them to take care of their lives, so that, (1.) They should replenish the earth, ver. 1, 7. (2.) They should be safe from the insults of the brute creatures, which should stand in awe of them, ver. 2. (3.) They should be allowed to eat flesh for the support of their lives, only they must not eat blood, ver. 3, 4. (4.) The world should never be destroyed again, ver. 8—11. 2. God requires of them to take care of one another's lives, and of their own, ver. 5, 6. 2. The seal of that covenant, viz. the Rainbow, ver. 12—17. 3. A particular passage of a story concerning Noah and his sons, which occasioned some prophecies that related to after-times. 1. Noah's sin and shame, ver. 20, 21. 2. Ham's impudence and impiety, ver. 22. 3. The pious modesty of Shem and Japhet, ver. 23. 4. The curse of Canaan, and the blessing of Shem and Japhet, ver. 24—27. 5. The age and death of Noah, ver. 28, 29.*

1. **A**ND God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. 2. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea: into your hand are they delivered. 3. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things: 4. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat. 5. And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. 6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. 7. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

We read in the close of the foregoing chapter the very kind things which God said in his heart, concerning the remnant of mankind which was now left to the seed of a new world. Now here we have those kind things spoken to them; in general God blessed Noah and his sons, ver. 1. i. e. he assured them of his good will to them, and his gracious intentions concerning them. This follows from what he said in his heart. Note, All God's promises of good flow from his purposes of love, and the counsels of his own will. See *Eph. i. 11—13*. and compare *Jer. xxix. 11.* *I know the thoughts that I think towards you.* We read, chap. viii. 20. how Noah blessed God, by his altar and sacrifice. Now

here we find God blessing Noah. Note, 1. God will graciously bless those (i. e. do well for them) who sincerely bless him, (i. e. speak well of him). 2. Those that are truly thankful for the mercies they have received, take the readiest way to have them confirmed and continued to them.

Now here we have the *Magna Charta* of this new kingdom of nature which was now to be erected, and incorporated, the former charter having been forfeited and seized.

1. The grants of this charter are kind and gracious to men. Here is, 1. A grant of lands of vast extent, and a promise of a great increase of men to occupy and enjoy them. The first blessing is here renewed, *Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth*, ver. 1. and repeated, ver. 7. for the the race of mankind was as it were to begin again. Now, 1. God sets the whole earth before them, tells them it is all their own, *while it remains*, to them and their heirs. Note, The earth God has given to the children of men, for a possession and habitation, *Psal. cxv. 16.* Though it be not a paradise but a wilderness rather, yet it is better than we deserve. Blessed be God it is not hell. 2. He gives them a blessing, by the force and virtue of which, mankind should be both multiplied and perpetuated upon earth; so that in a little time all the habitable parts of the earth should be more or less inhabited, and though one generation should pass away, yet another generation should come, while the world stands, so that the stream of the human race should be supplied with a constant succession; and run parallel with the current of time 'till both being delivered up together into the ocean of eternity. Though death should still reign, and the *Lord* would still be *known by his judgments*. Yet the earth should never again be dispeopled as now it was, but still replenished, *Acts xvii. 24.*

2. A grant of power over the inferior creatures, ver. 2. He grants, (1.) A title to them, *into your hands they are delivered*, for your use and benefit. (2.) A dominion over them, without which the title would avail little. *The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast.* This revives a former grant, *Gen. i. 28.* only with this difference, that men in innocency ruled by love, fallen man rules by fear. Now this grant remains in force, and thus far we have still the benefit of it. 1. That those creatures which are any way *useful to us are reclaimed*, and we use them either for service or food, or both, as they are capable. The horse and ox patiently submit to the bridle and yoke; and the sheep is dumb both before the shearer, and before the Butcher, for *the fear and dread of man* are upon them. 2. These creatures that are any way *hurtful to us are restrained*, so that though now and then, man may be hurt by some of them, yet they do not combine together to rise up in rebellion against man, else God could by these destroy the world as effectually as he did by a deluge, it is one of God's fore judgments, *Ezek. xiv. 21.* What is it that keeps wolves out of our towns, and lions out of our streets, and confines them to the wilderness but this fear and dread? Nay some have been tamed, *Jam. iii. 7.*

3. A grant of maintenance and subsistence, ver. 3. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you.* Hitherto most think, man had been confined to feed only upon the products of the earth, fruits, herbs, and roots, and all sorts of corn and milk, so was the first grant, *Gen. i. 29.* But the flood having perhaps washed away much of the virtue of the earth, and so rendered its fruits less pleasing, and less nourishing, God now enlarged the grant, and allowed man to eat flesh, which perhaps man himself never thought of 'till now, that God directed him to it, nor had any more desire to, than a sheep hath to suck blood like a wolf. But now man is allowed to feed upon flesh, as freely and safely as upon the green herb. Now here see, 1. That God is a good master, and provides not only that we may live; but that we may live comfortably in his service; not for necessity only but for delight. 2. That every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, *1 Tim. iv. 4.* Afterwards some meats that were proper enough for food, were prohibited by the ceremonial law, but from the beginning it seems it was not so, and therefore is not so under the gospel.

2. The precepts and proviso's of this charter are no less kind and gracious, and instances of God's good will to man. The Jewish doctors speak so often of the seven precepts of Noah, or of the sons of Noah, which they say were to be observed by all nations, that it may not be amiss to set them down. The first against the worship of idols. The second against blasphemy, and requiring to bless the name of God. The third against murder. The fourth against incest and all uncleanness. The fifth against theft and rapin. The sixth requiring the administration of justice. The seventh against eating of flesh with the life. These the Jews required the observation of from the *proselytes of the gate*. But the precepts here given all concern the life of man. 1. Man must not prejudice his own life by eating that food which is unwholesome, and prejudicial to his health, ver. 4. *Flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, i. e. raw flesh shall you not eat, as the beasts of prey do.* It was necessary to add this limitation to the grant of liberty to eat flesh, lest instead of nourishing their bodies by it they should destroy them. God would hereby shew, 1. That though they were lords of the creatures, yet they were subjects to the Creator, and under the restraints of his law. 2. That they must not be greedy and hasty in taking their



their food, but stay the preparing of it; not like Saul's soldiers 1 Sam. xiv. 32. nor riotous eaters of flesh, Prov. xxiii. 20. 3. That they must not be barbarous and cruel to the inferior creatures; they must be lords but not tyrants; they might kill them for their profit, but not torment them for their pleasure; nor tear away the member of a creature while it was yet alive, and eat that. 4. That during the continuance of the law of sacrifices in which the blood made atonement for the soul, Lev. xvii. 11. signifying that the life of the sacrifice was accepted for the life of the sinner, blood must not be looked upon as a common thing, but must be poured out before the Lord, (2 Sam. xxiii. 16.) either upon his altar, or upon his earth. But now the great and true sacrifice is offered, the obligation of the law ceaseth with the reason of it.

2. Man must not take away his own life, ver. 5. *Your blood of your lives will I require.* Our lives are not so our own as that we may quit them at our own pleasure, but they are God's, and we must resign them at his pleasure; if we any may hasten our own deaths we are accountable to God for it.

3. The beasts must not be suffered to hurt the life of man, *at the hand of every beast will I require it.* To shew how tender God was of the life of man (though he had lately made such destruction of lives) he will have the beast put to death that kills a man. This was confirmed by the law of Moses, *Exod. xxi. 28.* and I think it would not be unsafe to observe it still. Thus God shewed his hatred of the sin of murder, that men might hate it the more, and not only punish but prevent it. And see *Job v. 23*

4. Willful murderers must be put to death. This is the sin which is here designed to be restrained, by the terror of punishment.

1. God will punish murderers, *at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man,* i. e. I will avenge the blood of the murdered upon the murderer, 2 *Chron. xxiv. 22.* When God requires the life of a man at the hand of him that took it away unjustly, he cannot render that, and therefore must render his own in lieu of it, which is the only way left of making restitution. Note, The righteous God will certainly make inquisition for blood, though men cannot, or do not. One time or other, in this world, or in the next, he will both discover concealed murders, which are hid from man's eye, and punish avowed and justified murders, which are too great for man's hand.

2. The magistrate must punish murderers, ver. 6. *Who so sheddeth man's blood* (whether upon a sudden provocation, or premeditated, for rash anger is heart-murder as well as malice propense, *Matth. v. 21, 22.*) *by man shall his blood be shed,* i. e. by the magistrate; or whoever is appointed or allowed to be the avenger of blood. There are those who are ministers of God for this purpose, to be a protection to the innocent, by being a terror to the malicious and evil doers, and must not bear the sword in vain, *Rom. xiii. 4.* Before the flood, as it should seem by the story of Cain, God took the punishment of murder into his own hands, but now he committed this judgment to men, to masters of families at first, and afterwards to the heads of countries, who ought to be faithful to the trust reposed in them. Note, Willful murder ought always to be punished with death. It is a sin which the Lord would not pardon in a prince, 2 *Kings xxiv. 3, 4.* and which therefore a prince should not pardon in a subject. To this law there is a reason annexed, *for in the image of God made he man* at first, man is a creature dear to his Creator, and therefore ought to be so to us; God put honour upon him, let us not then put contempt upon him. Such remains of God's image are still even upon fallen man, as that he who unjustly kills a man defaceth the image of God, and doth dishonour to him. When God allowed men to kill their beasts, yet he forbid them to kill their slaves, for those are of a much more noble and excellent nature, not only God's creatures, but his image, *Jam. iii. 9.* All men have something of the image of God upon them, but magistrates have besides, the image of his power, and the saints the image of his holiness, and therefore those who shed the blood of princes or saints incur a double guilt.

8. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 9. And I, behold I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; 10. And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. 11. And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

Here is, 1. The general establishment of God's covenant with this new world, and the extent of that covenant, ver. 9, 10. Where observe, (1.) That God is graciously pleased to deal with man in the way of a covenant, wherein God greatly magnifies his condescending favour, and greatly encourages man's duty and obedience, as a reasonable and gainful service. (2.) That all God's covenants with man are of his own making, *I, behold,*

*It is thus expressed both to raise our admiration. Behold and wonder, that tho' God be high, yet he has this respect to man; and to confirm our assurances of the validity of the covenant. Behold and see, I make it, I that am faithful, and able to make it good. (3.) That God's covenants are established; firmer than the pillars of Heaven, or the foundations of the earth, and cannot be disannulled. (4.) That God's covenants are made with the covenanters and with their seed, the promises to them and their children. (5.) That those may be taken into covenant with God, and receive the benefits of it, who yet are not capable of stipulating, or giving their own consent. For this covenant is made with every living creature, every beast of the earth.*

2. The particular intendment of this covenant, it was designed to secure the world from another deluge, ver. 11. *there shall not any more be a flood.* God had drowned the world once, and still it as filthy and provoking as ever, and God foresaw the wickedness of it, and yet promised he would never drown it any more, for he deals not with us according to our sins. It is owing to God's goodness and faithfulness, not to any reformation of the world that it has not oft been deluged, and that it is not now so. As the old world was ruined to be a monument of justice, so this world remains to this day a monument of mercy, according to the oath of God, that the *waters of Noah should no more return to cover the earth,* Isa. liv. 9. This promise of God keeps the sea and clouds in their decreed place; and sets them gates and bars, *hitherto they shall come,* Job xxxviii. 10, 11. If the sea should flow but a few days, as it doth twice every day, for a few hours, what desolations would it make? So would the clouds, if such showers as we have sometimes seen were continued long: but God by flowing seas, and sweeping rains, shews what he could do in wrath, and yet by preserving the earth from being deluged between both shews what he can do in mercy, and will do in truth. Let us give him the glory of his mercy, in promising, and truth in performing. This promise doth not hinder, (1.) But that God may bring other waiting judgments upon mankind; for tho' he hath here bound himself not to use this arrow any more, yet he hath other arrows in his quiver. (2.) Nor but that he may destroy particular places and countries, by the inundations of the sea or rivers. (3.) Nor will the destruction of the world at the last day by fire, be any breach of his promise. Sin that drowned the old world, will burn this.

12. And God saith, this is the token of the covenant which I make between me, and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: 13. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. 14. And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: 15. And I will remember my covenant, which is between me, and you, and every living creature of all flesh: and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. 17. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Articles of agreement among men used to be sealed, that the covenants may be the more solemn, and the performances of the covenant the more sure to mutual satisfaction; God therefore being willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsels, hath confirmed his covenant by a seal, *Heb. vi. 17.* which makes the foundations we build on stand sure, 2 *Tim. ii. 19.* the seal of this covenant of nature was natural enough, it was the rainbow, which it is likely was seen in the clouds before, when second causes concurred, but was never a seal of the covenant, till now that it was made so by a divine institution. Now concerning this seal of the covenant, Observe, 1. This seal is affixed with repeated assurances of the truth of that promise which it was designed to be the ratification of. *I do set my bow in the cloud,* ver. 13. *it shall be seen in the cloud,* ver. 14. that the eye may affect the heart, and confirm the faith, and it shall be a token of the covenant, ver. 12, 13. *and I will remember my covenant, that the waters shall no more become a flood,* ver. 15. Nay, as if the eternal mind needed a memorandum, *I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant,* ver. 16. Thus here is line upon line, that we might have sure and strong consolation, who have laid hold on this hope. 2. The rainbow appears then when the clouds are most disposed to wet, and return after the rain: Then when we have most reason to fear the rain prevailing, God shews this seal of the promise that it shall not prevail. Thus God obviates our fears with such encouragements, as are both suitable and seasonable. 3. The thicker the cloud, the brighter the bow in the cloud. Thus as threatening afflictions abound, encouraging consolations much more abound, 2 *Cor. i. 5.* 4. The rainbow appears when one part of the sky is clear, which intimates mercy remembered in the midst of wrath, and the clouds hemmed as it were with the rainbow, that



that it may not over-spread the Heavens, for the bow is coloured rain, or the edges of a cloud gilded. 5. The rainbow is the reflection of the beams of the sun, which intimates that all the glory and significancy of the seals of the covenant is derived from Christ the son of righteousness, who is also described with a *rainbow about his throne*, Rev. iv. 3. and a *rainbow upon his head*, Rev. x. 1. which speaks not only his majesty, but his mediatorship. 6. The rainbow hath fiery colours in it, to signify that tho' God will not again drown the world, yet when the mystery of God shall be finished, the world shall be consumed with fire. 7. A bow speaks terror, but it hath neither string nor arrow, as the bow ordained against the persecutors has, *Psal. vii. 12, 13.* and a bow alone will do little execution: it is a bow but it is directed upwards, not towards the earth: for the seals of the covenant were intended to comfort, not to terrify. Lastly, As God looks upon the bow that he may remember the covenant, so should we, that we also may be ever mindful of the covenant, with faith and thankfulness.

18. And the sons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan. 19. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth over-spread. 20. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard. 21. And he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent. 22. And Ham the father of Canaan saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. 23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backwards and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their fathers nakedness.

Here is, 1. Noah's family and employment. The names of his sons are again mentioned, (*ver. 18, 19.*) as those from whom the whole earth was over-spread. By which it appears that Noah after the flood had no more children: all the world came from these three. Note, God when he pleases can make a *little one to become a thousand*, and greatly increase the latter end of those whose beginning was small. Such is the power and efficacy of a divine blessing. The business Noah applied himself to, was that of a husbandman. Hebr. a man of the earth, i. e. a man dealing in the earth, that kept ground in his hand and occupied it. We are all naturally men of the earth, made of it, living on it, and hastening to it: many are sinfully so, addicted to earthly things. Noah was by his calling led to trade in the fruits of the earth. He began to be a husbandman, i. e. some time after his departure out of the ark, he returned to his old employment, from which he had been diverted by the building of the ark first, and probably after by the building a house on dry land for himself and family. For this good while he had been a Carpenter, but now he began again to be a husbandman. Observe, Though Noah was a great man, and a good man, an old man, and a rich man, a man greatly favoured by Heaven, and honoured on earth, yet he would not live an idle life, nor think the husbandman's calling below him. Note, Though God by his providence may take us off from our callings for a time, yet when the occasion is over we ought with humility and industry to apply ourselves to them again: and in the calling wherein we are called, therein faithfully abide with God, 1 Cor. vii. 24.

2. Noah's sin and shame. He planted a vineyard, and when he had gathered his vintage, probably he appointed a day of mirth and feasting, in his family, and had his sons and their children with him, to rejoice with him, in the increase of his house, as well as in the increase of his vineyard, and we may suppose he prefaced his feast with a sacrifice to the honour of God. If that was omitted, it was just with God to leave him to himself, to end with the beasts that did not begin with God: but we charitably hope he did. And perhaps he appointed this feast with design in the close of it to bless his sons, as *Ishac*, Gen. xxvii. 3, 4. *That I may eat, and that my soul may bless thee.* At this feast, he drank of the wine, for who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit of it, but he drank too liberally, more than his head at this age would bear, for he was drunk. We have reason to think he was never drunk before nor after, look how he came now to be overtaken in this fault. It was his sin, and a great sin, so much the worse for it's being so soon after great deliverance; but God left him to himself, as he did Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. and has left this miscarriage of his upon record to teach us, 1. That the fairest copy that ever meer man wrote since the fall, had it's blots and false strokes. It was said of Noah that he was perfect in his generations, chap. vi. 9. but this shews that it is meant of sincerity, not a sinless perfection. 2. That sometimes those that with watchfulness and resolution have by the grace of God, kept their integrity in the midst of temptation, have through security and carelessness, and neglect of the grace of God, been surprized into sin, when the hour of temptation hath been over. Noah that had kept sober in drunken company, is now drunk in sober company. *Let him that drinketh be drunk take heed.* 3. That

we have need to be very careful when we use God's good creatures plentifully, lest we use them to excess. Christ's disciples must take heed, lest at any time *their hearts be overcharged*, Luke xxi. 34.

Now the consequent of Noah's shame. He was uncovered in his tent, made naked to his shame, as Adam when he had eaten forbidden fruit: yet Adam sought concealment, Noah is so destitute of thought and reason, that he seeks no covering. This was a fruit of the vine that Noah did not think of. Observe here the great evil of the sin of drunkenness. (1.) It discovers men, what infirmities they have they betray when they are drunk, and what secrets they are intrusted with are then easily got out of them. Drunken porters keep open gates. (2.) It disgraces men, and exposes them to contempt. As it shews them, so it shames them. Men say and do that when drunk, which when they are sober they would blush at the thoughts of, *Hab. ii. 15, 16.*

3. Ham's impudence and impiety, *verse 22.* he saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren. To see it accidentally and involuntarily, would not have been a crime; but (1.) He pleased himself with the sight, as the Edomites looked upon the day of their brother, *Obad. 12.* pleased and insulting. Perhaps Ham had sometimes been himself drunk, and reprov'd for it by his good father, whom he was therefore pleased to see thus overcome. Note, it is common for those who walk in false ways themselves to rejoice in the false steps which they sometimes see others make. But charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, nor can true penitents that are sorry for their own sins, rejoice in the sins of others. (2.) He told his two brethren without; in the street, as the word is, in a scornful deriding manner, that his father might seem vile unto them. It is a very ill thing, 1. To make a jest of sin, *Prov. xiv. 9.* and to be puffed up with that for which we should rather mourn, 1 Cor. v. 2. And 2. To publish the faults of any, especially of parents, whom it is our duty to honour. Noah was not only a good man, but had been a good father to him, and this was a most base disingenuous requital to him for his tenderness. Ham is here called the father of Canaan, which intimates that he who was himself a father, should have been more respectful to him that was his father.

4. The pious care of Shem and Japheth to cover their poor father's shame, *ver. 23.* They not only would not see it themselves but provided that no one else might see it; herein setting an example of charity with reference to other men's sin and shame; we must not only not say a confederacy with those that proclaim it, but we must be careful to conceal it, or however to make the best of it, so doing as we would be done by. (1.) There is a mantle of love to be thrown over the faults of all. 1 Pet. iv. 8. (2.) Besides that, there is a robe of reverence to be thrown over the faults of parents and other superiors.

24. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. 25. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. 26. And he said blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. 27. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

Here, 1. Noah comes to himself, *He awoke from his wine*: sleep cured him, and we may suppose so cured him that he never relapsed into that sin after. Those that sleep as Noah did, should awake as he did, and not as that drunkard, *Prov. xxiii. 35.* who saith when he awakes, *I will seek it yet again.*

2. The spirit of prophecy comes upon him, and like dying Jacob he tell his sons what should befall them, *Gen. xlix. 1.* (*ver. 25.*)

1. He pronounces a curse on Canaan the son of Ham, in whom Ham is himself cursed, either because this son of his was now more guilty than the rest, or because the posterity of this was afterwards to be rooted out of their land to make room for Israel. And Moses here records it for the animating of Israel in the wars of Canaan; tho' the Canaanites were a formidable people, yet they were of old an accursed people, and doomed to ruin. The particular curse is, a servant of servants, i. e. the meanest and most despicable servant shall he be, even to his brethren. Those who by birth were his equals, shall by conquests be his lords. This certainly points at the victories obtained by Israel over the Canaanites, by which they were all either put to the sword, or put under tribute, *Jos. ix. 23. Jud. i. 28, 30, 33, 35.* which happened not till about eight hundred years after this. Note, 1. God often visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, especially when the children inherit the fathers wicked dispositions, and intimate the fathers wicked practices, and do nothing to cut off the intail of a curse. 2. Disgrace is justly put upon those that put disgrace upon others, especially that dishonour and grieve their own Parents. An undutiful child that mocks at his parents is no more worthy to be called a son, but deserves to be made as a hired servant, nay as a servant of servants among his brethren. 3. Tho' divine curses operate slowly, yet first or last they will take effect. The Canaanites were under a curse of slavery, and yet for a great while had the dominion; for a family, a people, a nation, may lie under the curse of God, and yet may long prosper in the world, till the measure of his iniquity, like that of the Canaanites,



Canaanites, be full. Many are marked for ruin that are not yet ripe for ruin. Therefore, Let not thine heart envy sinners.

2. He entails a blessing upon Shem and Japheth.

1. He bleſſeth Shem, or rather, bleſſeth God for him, yet ſo that it entitles him to the greateſt honour and happineſs imaginable, *ver. 26.* Obſerve, 1. He calls the Lord, *the God of Shem*, and happy, thrice *happy is that people whoſe God is the Lord*, *Pſal. cxliv.*

15. All bleſſings are included in this. This was the bleſſing conferred on Abraham and his ſeed, the God of Heaven was *not aſhamed to be called their God*, *Heb. xi. 16.* Shem is ſufficiently recompenced for his reſpect to his father by this, that the Lord himſelf puts this honour upon him to be his God, which is a ſufficient recompence for all our ſervices and all our ſufferings for his name.

2. He gives to God the glory of that good work which Shem had done, and inſtead of bleſſing and praiſing him, that was the inſtrument, he bleſſeth and praiſeth God that was the author. Note, The glory of all that is at any time well done by ourſelves or others, muſt be humbly and thankfully tranſmitted to God who works all our good works in us and for us. When we ſee mens good works, we ſhould glorify not them, but *our Father*, *Matth. v. 16.* Thus David in effect bleſſed Abigail, when he *bleſſed God* that ſent her, *1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33.* for it is an honour and favour to be employed for God, and uſed by him in doing good. 3. He foreſees and foretells that God's gracious dealings with Shem and his family, would be ſuch as would evidence to all the world, that he was the God of Shem, on which behalf thankſgivings would by many be rendered to him. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Shem.* 4. It is intimated, that the church ſhould be built up and continued in the poſterity of Shem; for of him came the Jews, who were, for a great while, the only profeſſing people God had in the world. 5. Some think reference is here had to Chriſt, who was the Lord God, that in his human nature ſhould deſcend from the loins of Shem, for of him, as concerning the fleſh, Chriſt came. 6. Canaan is particularly enſlaved to him, *He ſhall be his ſervant.* Note, Thoſe that have the Lord for their God, ſhall have as much of the honour and power of this world as he ſees good for them.

2. He bleſſeth Japheth, and in him the iſles of the Gentiles that were peopled by his ſeed, *ver. 27. God ſhall enlarge Japheth, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem.* Now, 1. Some make this wholly to belong to Japheth, and to ſpeak either, (1.) His outward proſperity, that his ſeed ſhould be ſo numerous, and ſo victorious, that they ſhould be maſters of the tents of Shem, which was fulfilled when the people of the Jews, the moſt eminent of Shem's race, were tributaries to the Grecians firſt, and afterwards to the Romans, both of Japheth's ſeed. Note, Outward proſperity is no infallible mark of the true church: the tents of Shem ate not always the tents of the conqueror. Or, (2.) It ſpeaks the conversion of the Gentiles, and the bringing of them into the church; and then we would read it, *God ſhall perſuade Japheth* (for ſo the word ſignifies) and then being ſo perſuaded, *he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem*, i. e. Jews and Gentiles ſhall be united together in the goſpel-fold; after many of the Gentiles ſhall have been profelyted to the Jewish religion, both ſhall be one in Chriſt, *Eph. ii. 14, 15.* And the Chriſtian church, moſtly made up of the Gentiles, ſhall ſucceed the Jews in the privileges of church-membership; and they having firſt caſt themſelves out by their unbelief, the Gentiles ſhall dwell in their tents, *Rom. xi. 11, &c.* Note, 1. It is God only that can bring thoſe again into the church who have ſeparated themſelves from it. It is the power of God that makes the goſpel of Chriſt effectual to ſalvation, *Rom. i. 16.* 2. Souls are brought into the church, not by force, but by perſuaſion, *Pſal. cx. 3.* They are drawn by the cords of a man, and perſuaded by reaſon to be religious. 2. Others divide this between Japheth and Shem, Shem having not been directly bleſſed, *ver. 26.* 1. Japheth has the bleſſing of earth beneath; *God ſhall enlarge Japheth*; enlarge his ſeed, enlarge his border; Japheth's poſterity peopled all Europe, a great part of Aſia, and perhaps America. Note, 1. God is acknowledged in all our enlargements. It is he that enlargeth the coaſt, and enlargeth the heart. 2. Many dwell in large tents, that do not dwell in God's tents, as Japheth did. 2. Shem hath the bleſſing of Heaven above: *He ſhall*, i. e. God ſhall *dwell in the tents of Shem*, i. e. from his loins *Chriſt ſhall come*, and in his ſeed the church ſhall be continued. The birth-right was now to be divided between Shem and Japheth, Ham being utterly diſcarded; in the principality they equally ſhare, Canaan ſhall be ſervant to both; the double portion is given to Japheth, whom God ſhall enlarge. But the prieſthood was given to Shem, for *God ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem*; and certainly we are more happy if we have God dwelling in our tents; it is better to *dwell in tents* with God than in palaces without him; in Salem, where is God's tabernacle, there is more ſatisfaction than in all the *iſles of the Gentiles*. 3. They both have dominion over Canaan; *Canaan ſhall be ſervant to them*; ſo ſome read it. When Japheth joins with Shem, Canaan falls before them both: When ſtrangers become friends enemies become ſervants.

28. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

Here ſee, 1. How God prolonged the life of Noah, to a great old age, 950 years, 20 more than Adam's, and but 19 leſs than Methuſelah's: this long life was a further reward of his ſignal piety, and a great bleſſing to the world, to which, no doubt, he continued a *preacher of righteouſneſs*, with this advantage, that now all he preached to were his own children. 2. How God put a period to his life at laſt; though he lived long, yet he died, probably having firſt ſeen many that deſcended from him dead before him. Noah lived to ſee two worlds, but being an heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith, when he died, he went to ſee a better than either.

## C H A P. X.

*This chapter ſhews more particularly what was ſaid in general, chap. ix. 19. concerning the three ſons of Noah, that of them was the whole earth overſpread; and the fruit of that bleſſing, chap. ix. 1, 7, replenish the earth. It is the only certain account extant of the original of nations, and yet perhaps there is no nation but that of the Jews that can be confident from which of theſe 70 fountains (for ſo many there are here) it derives it's ſtreams. Thro' the want of early records, the mixtures of people, the revolutions of nations, and diſtance of time, the knowledge of the lineal deſcent of the preſent inhabitants of the earth is loſt; nor were any genealogies preſerved but thoſe of the Jews for the ſake of the Meſſiah, only in this chapter we have a brief account, 1. Of the poſterity of Japheth, ver. 2—5. 2. The poſterity of Ham, v. 6—20. and in that, particular notice taken of Nimrod, ver. 8, 9. 3. The poſterity of Shem, ver. 23. to the end.*

1. **N**OW theſe are the generations of the ſons of Noah; Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were ſons born after the flood. 2. The ſons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meſhech, and Tiras. 3. And the ſons of Gomer; Aſhkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. 4. And the ſons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarſhiſh, Kitim, and Dodanim. 5. By theſe were the iſles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

Moſes begins with Japheth's family, either becauſe he was the eldeſt, or becauſe that lay remoteſt from Iſrael, and had leaſt concern with them, at that time when Moſes wrote; and therefore he mentions that race very briefly; haſtning to give account of the poſterity of Ham who were Iſrael's enemies, and of Shem, who were Iſrael's anceſtors: for it is the church that the ſcripture is deſigned to be the hiſtory of, and of the nations of the world only as they were ſome way or other related to Iſrael, and intereſted in the affairs of Iſrael. Obſerve, 1. Notice is taken that the ſons of Noah had ſons born to them after the flood, to repair and rebuild the world of mankind which the flood had ruined. He that had killed, now makes alive. 2. The poſterity of Japheth were allotted to the iſles of the Gentiles, (*ver. 5.*) which were ſolemnly by lot, after a ſurvey, divided among them, and probably this iſland of ours among the reſt; all places beyond the ſea, from Judea, are called iſles, *Jer. xxv. 22.* and this directs us to underſtand that promiſe, *Iſa. xlii. 4. The iſles ſhall wait for his law*, of the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Chriſt.

6. And the ſons of Ham; Cuſh, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. 7. And the ſons of Cuſh, Seba, and Havilah, and Sabrah, and Raamah and Sabtecha; and the ſons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. 8. And Cuſh begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. 9. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is ſaid, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. 10. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. 11. Out of that land went forth Aſher, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah. 12. And Reſen between Nineveh and Calah: the ſame is a great city. 13. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, 14. And Pathruſim, and Caſluhim, (out of whom came Philitiſtim) and Caphtorim.

That which is obſervable and improveable in theſe verſes is the accounts here given of Nimrod, *ver. 8, 9, 10, 11.* He is here repreſented as a great man in his day, *He began to be a mighty one in the earth*, i. e. whereas thoſe that went before him were content to ſtand upon the ſame level with their neighbours, and though every man bare rule in his own houſe, yet no man pretended any further. Nimrod's aſpiring mind could not reſt in this parity, but he would top his neighbours and would not only be eminent above them, but lord over them. The ſame ſpirit that the giants before the flood were acted by who became *mighty men, and men of renown*, (*Gen. vi. 4.*) now revived in him, ſo ſoon was that tremendous judgment, which



which the pride and tyranny of those mighty men brought upon the world forgotten. Note. There are some in whom ambition and affectation of dominion seems to be bred in the bone, such there have been, and will be, notwithstanding the wrath of God often revealed from Heaven against them. Nothing on this side hell will humble and break the proud spirits of some men, in this like Lucifer, *Isa. xiv. 14, 15.* Now,

1. *Nimrod was a great hunter*; this he began with, and for this became famous to a proverb. Every great hunter is in remembrance of him called a Nimrod. 1. Some think he did good with his hunting, served his country by ridding the wild beasts which did infest it, and so insinuated himself into the affections of his neighbours, and got to be their prince: those that exercise authority, either are, or at least would be called benefactors, *Luke xxii. 25.* 2. Others think under pretence of hunting he gathered men under his command in pursuit of another game he had to play, which was, to make himself master of the country, and to bring them into subjection. He was a *mighty hunter*, i. e. he was a violent invader of his neighbour's rights and properties, and a persecutor of innocent men, carrying all before him, and endeavouring to make all his own by force and violence. He thought himself a mighty prince, but *before the Lord*, i. e. in God's account he was but a mighty hunter. Note, Great conquerors are but great hunters; Alexander and Cæsar would not make such a figure in scripture history as they do in common history: the former is represented in prophecy as a he-goat pushing, *Dan. viii. 5.* Nimrod was a mighty hunter *against the Lord*, so the LXX; that is, 1. He set up idolatry, as Jeroboam did, for the confirming of his usurped dominion: that he might set up a new government, he set up a new religion upon the ruin of the primitive constitution of both: *Babel was the mother of harlots.* Or, 2. He carried on his oppressions and violences in defiance of God himself; daring Heaven with his impieties, as if he and his huntsmen could out-brave the Almighty, and were a match for the Lord of Hosts and all his armies: *As if it were a small thing to weary men, he thinks to weary my God also, Isa. vii. 13.*

2. *Nimrod was a great ruler*, ver. 10. *The beginning of his kingdom was Babel.* Some way, or rather by arts or arms, he got into power: either chosen to it, or forcing his way to it, and so laid the foundations of a monarchy, which was afterwards a head of gold, and the terror of the mighty, and bid fair to be universal. It doth not appear that he had any right to rule by birth, but either his fitness for government recommended him, as some think, to an election, or by power and policy he gradually advanced, and perhaps insensibly, into the throne: See the antiquity of civil government, and particularly that form of it which lodges the sovereignty in a single person. If Nimrod and his neighbours began, other nations soon learned to incorporate under one head for their common safety and welfare, which, however it began, proved so great a blessing to the world, that things were reckoned to go ill indeed when there *was no king in Israel.*

3. Nimrod was a great builder; probably he was architect in the building of Babel, and there he began his kingdom, but when his project to rule all the sons of Noah was baffled by the confusion of tongues, *out of that land he went forth into Assyria* (so the margin reads it, ver. 11.) *and built Nineveh, &c.* that having built these cities he might command them, and rule over them. Observe in Nimrod the nature of ambition. 1. It is boundless, much would have more, and still cries, *Give, give.* 2. It is restless: Nimrod, when he had four cities under his command, could not be content till he had four more. 3. It is expensive: Nimrod will rather be at the charge of rearing cities than not have the honour of ruling them. The spirit of building is the common effect of a spirit of pride. 4. It is daring, and will stick at nothing: Nimrod's name signifies Rebellion, which (if indeed he did abuse his power to the oppression of his neighbours) teaches us that tyrants to men are rebels to God, and their rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

15. And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth, 16. And the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Girgashite, 17. And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, 18. And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. 19. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lashah. 20. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

Observe here, 1. That the account of the posterity of Canaan, the families and nations that descended from him, and the land they possessed, is more particular than of any other in this chapter, because these were the nations that were to be subdued before Israel, and their land was in process of time to become the *holy land, Immanuel's land*; and this God had an eye to, when in the mean time he cast the lot of that accursed devoted race in that spot of ground which he had spied out for his own people; this Moses takes notice of, *Deut. xxxii. 8. When the most high divided to the nations their inheritance; he set the bounds of the people according to the number of*

*the children of Israel.* 2. That by this account it appears that the posterity of Canaan was both numerous and rich, and very pleasantly seated, and yet Canaan was under a curse, a divine curse, and not a curse causeless. Note, Those that are under the curse of God may yet perhaps thrive and prosper in this world; for we cannot know love or hatred, the blessing or the curse by what is before us, but by what is within us, *Ecclef. ix. 1.* The curse of God always works really, and always terribly, but perhaps it is a secret curse, a curse to the soul, and doth not work visibly, or a slow curse, and doth not work presently, but sinners are by it reserved for, and bound over to a day of wrath; Canaan here has a better land than either Shem or Japheth, and yet they have a better lot, for they inherit the blessing.

21. Unto Shem also the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. 22. The children of Shem; Elam, and Ashur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. 23. And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. 24. And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber. 25. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided; and his brothers name was Joktan. 26. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, 27. And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, 28. And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba. 29. And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. 30. And their dwelling was from Mesha, and as thou goest unto Saphar, a mount of the east. 31. These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations. 32. These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

Two things especially are observable in this account of the posterity of Shem. 1. The description of Shem, ver. 21. we have not only his name Shem, which signifies a name, but two titles to distinguish him by. (1.) He was *the father of all the children of Eber*: Eber was his great grandson, but why should he be called the father of all his children rather than of all Arphaxad's, or Salah's, &c. probably because Abraham and his seed, God's covenant people, not only descended from Heber, but from him were called Hebrews, *Gen. xiv. 13. Abraham the Hebrew*: St Paul looked upon it as his privilege, that he was a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, *Phil. iii. 5.* Eber himself, we may suppose, was a man eminent for religion in a time of general apostacy, and a great example of piety to his family; and the holy tongue being commonly called from him the Hebrew, it is probable he retained it in his family in the confusion of Babel, as a special token of God's favour to him; and from him the professors of religion were called *the children of Eber*; now when the inspired pen-man would give them an honourable title, he calls him the *father of the Hebrews*, though when Moses wrote this they were a poor despised people, bond-slaves in Egypt, yet being God's people, it was an honour to a man to be a-kin to them. As Ham, though he had many sons, is disowned by being called the *father of Canaan*, on whose seed the curse was entailed, chap. ix. 22. So Shem, tho' he had many sons, is dignified with the Title of *the father of Eber*, on whose seed the blessing was entailed. Note, A family of saints is more truly honourable than a family of nobles, Shem's holy seed than Ham's royal seed, Jacob's twelve patriarchs, than Ishmael's twelve princes, *Gen. xvii. 20.* Goodness is true greatness. (2.) He was *the brother of Japheth the elder*; by which it appears, that tho' Shem be commonly put first, yet he was not Noah's first-born, but Japheth was elder: but why should this also be put as part of Shem's title and description, that he *was the brother of Japheth*, since that had been in effect said often before: and was not he as much brother to Ham? Probably this was intended to signify the union of the Gentiles with the Jews in the church. He had mentioned it as Shem's honour, that he was the father of the Hebrews, but lest Japheth's seed should therefore be looked upon as for ever shut out from the church, he here minds us, that he *was the brother of Japheth*, not in birth only, but in blessing, for *Japheth was to dwell in the tents of Shem.* Note, 1. Those are brethren in the best manner that are so by grace, and that meet in the covenant of God, and in the communion of saints. 2. God, in dispensing his grace, doth not go by seniority, but the younger sometimes gets the start of the elder in coming into the church, *so the last shall be first, and the first last.* 3. The reason of the name of Peleg, ver. 25. because *in his days* (i. e. about the time of his birth, when his name was given him) *was the earth divided* among the children of men that were to inhabit it; either when Noah divided it by an orderly distribution of it, as Joshua divided the land of Canaan by lot, or when upon their refusal to comply with that division, God, in justice, divided them by the confusion of tongues; which soever of these was the occasion, pious Heber saw cause to perpetuate the remembrance of it in the name of his son; and justly



justly may our sons be called by the same name, for in our days, in another sense is the earth, the church, most wretchedly divided.

## C H A P. XI.

*The old distinction between the sons of God, and the sons of men, professors and profane, survived the flood, and now appeared again, when men began to multiply: according to this distinction we have in this chapter. 1. The dispersion of the sons of men at Babel, ver. 1,—9. where we have, (1.) their presumptuous provoking design, which was to build a city and a tower, ver. 1,—4. (2.) The righteous judgment of God upon them in disappointing their design, by confounding their language, and so scattering them, ver. 5,—9. 2. The pedigree of the sons of God down to Abraham, ver. 10,—26. with a general account of his family, and removal out of his native country, ver. 27. ad fin.*

1. **A**ND the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. 2. And it came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. 3. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. 4. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

The close of the foregoing chapter tells us, that by the sons of Noah, or, among the sons of Noah, the nations were *divided in the earth after the flood*, i. e. they were distinguished into several tribes or colonies, and the places they had hitherto lived in together, being grown too strait for them, it was either appointed by Noah, or agreed upon among his sons, which way each several tribe or colony should steer its course, beginning with the countries that were next them, and designing to proceed further and further, and to remove to a greater distance from each other, as the increase of their several companies should require. Thus was the matter well settled one hundred years after the flood, about the time of Peleg's birth: but the sons of men, it should seem were loth to scatter into distant places, they thought the more the merrier, and the safer, and therefore they contrived to keep together, and were *slack to go to possess the land, which the Lord God of their fathers had given them*, Jos. xviii. 3. thinking themselves wiser than either God or Noah. Now here we have,

1. The advantages which befriended their design of keeping together, 1. They were all of *one language*, ver. 1. If there were any different languages before the flood, yet Noah's only, which it is likely was the same with Adam's, was preserved through the flood, and continued after it. Now while they all understood one another, they would be the more likely to love one another, and the more capable of helping one another, and the less inclinable to separate one from another. 2. They found a very convenient commodious place to settle in, ver. 2. *a plain in the land of Shinar*, a spacious plain, and able to contain them all, a fruitful plain, and able to sustain them all, according as their present numbers were, not considering what room there would be for them, when they would be multiplied. Note, Inviting accommodations for the present, often prove too strong temptations to neglect both duty and interest, for hereafter.

2. The method they took to bind themselves to one another, and so settle together in one body. Instead of coveting to enlarge their borders by a peaceable departure under the divine protection, they contrived to fortify it, and as those that were resolved to wage war with Heaven, they put themselves into a posture of defence. Their unanimous resolution is, *Let us build us a city and a tower*. It is observable, that the first builders of cities, both in the old world, Gen. iv. 17. and in the new world here, were not men of the best character and reputation: tents served God's subjects to dwell in, cities were first built by those that were rebels against him, and revolvers from him. Observe here,

(1.) How they excited and encouraged one to another to set about this work; they said, *Go to, let us make brick*, ver. 3. and again, ver. 4. *Go to, let us build us a city*; by mutual excitements they made one another more daring and resolute. Note, Great things may be brought to pass when the undertakers are numerous and unanimous, and stir up one another to it. Let us learn to provoke one another to love, and to good works, as sinners stir up and encourage one another to wicked works. See *Psal. cxxii. 1. Isa. ii. 3, 5. Jer. 1. 5.*

(2.) What materials they used in their building: the country being plain, yielded neither stone nor mortar, yet that did not discourage them from their undertaking, but they made brick to serve instead of stone, and slime, or pitch, instead of mortar. See here, 1. What shift those will make that are resolute in their purposes; were we but thus zealously affected in a good thing we should not balk our work, so oft as we do, under pretence that

we want conveniencies for the carrying of it on. 2. What a difference there is between mens building and God's, when men build their Babel brick and slime are their best materials, but when God builds his Jerusalem, he lays even the *foundations of it with sapphires, and all its borders with pleasant stones*, Isa. liv. 11, 12: Rev. xxi. 19.

(3.) For what ends they built. Some think they intended hereby to secure themselves against the waters of another flood: God had told them indeed he would not again drown the world; but they would trust to a tower of their own making, rather than to a promise of God's making, or an ark of his appointing: but if they had had this in their eye, they would have chosen to build their tower upon a mountain, rather than upon a plain; but three things it seems they aimed at in building this tower.

1. It seems designed for an affront to God himself: for they would build a tower *whose top might reach to heaven*, which speaks a defiance of God, or at least a rivalry with him; they will be like the most high, or come as near him as they can, not in holiness but in height. They forget their place, and scorning to creep on the earth, they resolve to climb to Heaven, not by the door, or ladder, but some other way.

2. They hoped hereby to make them a name: they would do something to be talked of now, and to give posterity to know that there had been such men as they in the world: rather than die and leave no memorandum behind them, they would leave this monument of their pride and ambition, and folly. Note, 1. Affectation of honour, and a name among men, commonly spirits men strangely for great and difficult undertakings, and often betrays them to that which is evil and offensive to God. 2. It is just with God to bury those names in the dust which are raised by sin. These Babel-builders put themselves to a great deal of foolish expence to make them a name; but they could not gain no not this point, for we do not find in any history the name of so much as one of these Babel-builders; Philo Judæus saith, they engraved every one his name upon a brick, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, yet neither did that serve their purpose.

3. They did it to prevent their dispersion; *lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth*: It was done (saith Josephus) in disobedience to that command, *chap. ix. 1, replenish the earth*. God orders them to scatter; no, say they, we will not, we will live and die together. In order hereunto they engage themselves, and one another, in this vast undertaking. That they might unite in one glorious empire, they resolve to build this city and tower, to be the metropolis of their kingdom, and the centre of their unity. It is probable, the hand of ambitious Nimrod was in all this: he could not content himself with the command of a particular colony, but aimed at an universal monarchy, in order to which, under pretence of writing for their common safety, he contrives to keep them in one body, that having them all under his eye, he might not fail to have them under his power. See the daring presumption of these sinners: here is a bold opposition to God; you shall be scattered, saith God, but we will not, say they, *Woe unto him that thus strives with his maker*. (2.) A bold competition with God. It is God's prerogative to be universal monarch, Lord of all, and king of kings; the man that aims at it, offers to step into the throne of God, who will not give his glory to another.

5. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built. 6. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. 7. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. 8. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 9. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

We have here the quashing of the project of the Babel-builders, and the turning of the counsel of those froward men headlong, that God's council might stand in spite of them. Here is,

1. The cognizance God took of the design that was on foot, ver. 5. *The Lord came down to see the city*; it is an expression after the manner of men, he knew it as clearly and fully as men know that which they come upon the place to view. Observe, 1. Before he gave judgment upon their cause, he enquired into it, for God is uncontestably just and fair in all his proceedings against sin and sinners, and condemns none unheard. 2. It is spoken of as an act of condescension in God to take notice even of this building, which the undertakers were so proud of; for he humbles himself to behold the transactions, even the most considerable ones of this lower world, *Psal. cxiii. 6.* 3. It is said to be *the tower which the children of men built*, which speaks, 1. Their weakness and frailty as men: it was a very foolish thing for the children of men, worms of the earth, to defy Heaven, and to provoke the Lord to jealousy,



jealousy, *Are they stronger than he.* 2. Their finfulness and obnoxiousness, they were the sons of Adam, so it is in the Hebrew, nay, of that Adam, that sinful disobedient Adam, whose children are by nature children of disobedience, children that are corrupters. 3. Their distinction from *the children of God*, the professors of religion from whom these daring builders had separated themselves, and built this tower to support and perpetuate the separation. Pious Eber is not found among this ungodly crew, for he and his are called, *the children of God*, and therefore their souls *come not into the secret, nor unite themselves to the assembly of these children of men.*

2. The counsels and resolves of the eternal mind concerning this matter; he did not come down merely as a spectator, but as a judge, as a prince, to *look upon these proud men, and abase them*, Job xl. 11, 12, 13, 14. Observe, 1. He suffered them to proceed a good way in their enterprize, before he put a stop to it, that they might have space to repent, and if they had so much consideration left, might be ashamed of it, and weary of it themselves. And if not, that their disappointment might be the more shameful, and every one that passed by might laugh at them, saying, *These men began to build, and were not able to finish*: and the works of their hands, from which they promised themselves immortal honour, would turn to their perpetual reproach. Note, God has wise and holy ends in permitting the enemies of his glory, to carry on their impious projects a great way, and to prosper long in their enterprizes. 2. When they had with much care and toil made some considerable progress in their building, then God determined to break their measures, and disperse them. Observe, 1. The righteousness of God, which appears in the considerations upon which he proceeded in this resolution, *ver. 6.* Two things he considered, 1. The oneness, as a reason why they must be scattered, *Behold the people is one, and they have all one language*; and if they continue one, much of the earth will be left uninhabited, the power of their prince will soon be exorbitant, wickedness, and prophaneness, will be unsufferably rampant, for they will strengthen one another's hands in it, and, which is worst of all, they will be an overballance to the church, and these children of men, if thus incorporated, will swallow up the little remnant of God's children; therefore it is decreed they must not be one. Note, Unity is policy, but it is not the infallible mark of a true church; yet while the builders of Babel, though of different families, dispositions, and interests, were thus unanimous in opposing God, what a pity is it, and what a shame, that the builders of Zion, tho' united in one common head and spirit, should be divided as they are in serving God; but marvel not at the matter, Christ came not to send peace. 2. Their obstinacy, now nothing will be restrained from them, and this is a reason why they must be crossed, and thwarted in their design: God had tried by his commands and admonitions to bring them off from this project, but in vain, therefore he must take another course with them. See here, 1. The finfulness of sin, and the wilfulness of sinners, ever since Adam would not be restrained from the forbidden tree, his unsanctified seed have been impatient of restraint, and ready to rebel against it. 2. See the necessity of God's judgments upon earth, to keep the world in some order, and to tie the hands of those that will not be checked by law.

2. See the wisdom and mercy of God in the methods that were taken for the defeating of this enterprize, *ver. 7.* *Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language*: this was not spoken to the angels, as if God needed either their advice, or their assistance, but God speaks it to himself, or the Father to the Son and Holy Ghost; they said, *Go to, let us make brick, and go to, let us build a tower*, animating one another to the attempt, and now God faith, *Go to, let us confound their language*; for if men stir up themselves to sin, God will stir up himself to take vengeance, *Isa. lix. 17, 18.* Now observe here,

(1.) The mercy of God in moderating the penalty, and not making that proportionable to the offence, for he *deals not with us according to our sins*: he doth not say, *Let us go down*, now in thunder and lightning, and consume those rebels in a moment: or, let the earth open and swallow up them and their building, and let them go down quick into hell, who are climbing to Heaven the wrong way; no, only *let us go down*, and scatter them: they deserved death, but are only banished or transported, for the patience of God is very great towards a provoking world. Punishments are chiefly reserved for the future state, God's judgments on sinners in this life, compared with those, are little more than restraints.

(2.) The wisdom of God, in pitching upon an effectual expedient to stay proceedings, which was the confounding of their language, that they might not understand one another's speech, nor could they well join hands when their tongues were divided; so that this would be a very proper means, both to take them off from their building, for if they could not understand one another, they could not help one another, as also to dispose them to scatter, for when they could not understand one another they could not enjoy one another. Note, God has various means and effectual ones to baffle and defeat the projects of proud men that set themselves against him, and particularly to divide them among themselves, either by dividing their spirits, *Jud. ix. 23.* or by dividing their tongues, as David prays, *Psal. lv. 10.*

3. The execution of these counsels of God, to the blasting and defeating of the counsels of men, *ver. 8, 9.* God made them know *whose word should stand, his or theirs*, as the expression is, *Jer. xlv. 28.* Notwithstanding their oneness and obstinacy, God was too hard for them, and wherein they dealt proudly *he was above them; for who ever hardened his heart against him and prospered.* Three things were done, 1. Their language was confounded. God, who when he made man, taught him to speak, and put words into his mouth fit to express the conceptions of his mind by, now made those builders to forget their former language; and to speak and understand a new one, which yet was the same to those of the same tribe or family, but not to others: those of one colony could converse together, but not with those of another. Now, (1.) This was a great miracle, and a proof of the power which God has upon the minds and tongues of men, which he turneth as the rivers of water. (2.) This was a great judgment upon those builders, for being thus deprived of the knowledge of the antient and holy tongue, they were become incapable of communicating with the true church, in which it was retained, and probably it contributed much to their loss of the knowledge of the true God. (3.) We all suffer by it to this day: in all the inconveniences we sustain by the diversity of languages, and all the pains and trouble we are at to learn the languages we have occasion for, we smart for the rebellion of our ancestors at Babel. Nay, and those unhappy controversies which are strifes of words, and arise from our misunderstanding of one another's language, for ought I know, are owing to this confusion of tongues. (4.) The project of some to frame an universal character in order to an universal language; how desirable soever it may seem, yet I think is but a vain thing to attempt, for it is to strive against a divine sentence, by which the languages of the nations will be divided while the world stands. (5.) We may here lament the loss of the universal use of the Hebrew tongue, which from henceforth was the vulgar language of the Hebrews only, and continued so till the captivity in Babylon, where, even among them, it was exchanged for the Syriac. (6.) As the confounding of tongues divided the children of men, and scattered them abroad, so the gift of the tongues bestowed upon the apostles, *Acts ii.* contributed greatly to the gathering together of the children of God, which were scattered abroad, and the uniting of them in Christ, that with one mind and mouth they might glorify God, *Rom. xv. 6.*

2. Their building was stopped, they left off to build the city. This was the effect of the confusion of their tongues; for it not only disabled them to help one another, but probably struck such a damp upon their spirits that they could not proceed, since they saw in this the hand of the Lord gone out against them. Note, 1. It is wisdom to leave off that which we see God fights against. 2. God is able to blast and bring to nought all the devices and designs of Babel-builders. He sits in Heaven and laughs at the counsels of the kings of the earth against him and his anointed, and will force them to confess, that there is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord, *Prov. xxi. 30. Isa. viii. 9, 10.*

3. The builders were scattered abroad from thence upon the face of the whole earth, *ver. 8, 9.* they departed in companies after their families, and after their tongues, (*chap. x. 5, 20, 31.*) to the several countries and places allotted to them in the division that had been made, which they knew before, but would not go to take the possession of till now that they were forced to it. Observe here, 1. That the very thing which they feared came upon them; that dispersion which they thought to evade by their rebellion, they pulled upon themselves by it; for that trouble we are most likely to fall into which we seek to evade by indirect and sinful methods. 2. That it was God's work; *the Lord scattered them*, God's hand is to be acknowledged in all scattered providences; if the family be scattered, relations scattered, churches scattered, it is the Lord's doing. 3. That though they were as firmly in league with one another, as could be, yet the Lord scattered them; for no man can keep together what God will put asunder. 4. That thus God justly took vengeance on them for their oneness in that presumptuous attempt to build their tower; shameful dispersions are the just punishment of sinful unions; Simeon and Levi, who had been brethren in iniquity, were divided in Jacob, *Gen. xlix. 5, 7. Psal. lxxxiii. 5, 7, 13.* 5. That they left behind them a perpetual memorandum of their reproach in the name given to the place, it was called Babel, confusion. They that aim at a great name commonly come off with an ill name. 6. The children of men were now finally scattered, and never did nor ever will come all together again till the great day, when the son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him, *Matth. xxv. 31, 32.*

10. These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood. 11. And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 12. And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years and begat Salah. 13. And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. 14. And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber. 15. And Salah



Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years; and begat sons and daughters. 16. And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg. 17. And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. 18. And Peleg lived thirty years and begat Reu. 19. And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters. 20. And Reu lived two and thirty years and begat Serug. 21. And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. 22. And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor. 23. And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 24. And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah. 25. And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters. 26. And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

We have here a genealogy, not an endless genealogy, for here it ends in Abram, the friend of God, and leads further to Christ the promised seed, who was the son of Abraham, and from Abraham the genealogy of Christ is reckoned, *Matth. i. 1, &c.* so that put, *Gen. v. Gen. xi. and Matth. i.* together, and you have such an entire genealogy of Jesus Christ as cannot be produced (for ought I know) concerning any person in the world out of his line, and at such a distance from the fountain-head. And laying these three genealogies together, we shall find, that twice ten and thrice fourteen generations or descents passed between the first and second Adam, making it clear concerning Christ, not only that he was the son of Abraham, but the son of man, and the seed of the woman. Observe here, 1. That nothing is left upon record concerning those of this line, but their names and ages; the Holy Ghost seeming to hasten through them to the story of Abraham. How little do we know of those that are gone before us in this world, even those that lived in the same places where we live, as we likewise know little of those that are our cotemporaries, but in distant places; we have enough to do to mind the work of our own day, and let God alone to require that which is past, *Eccl. iii. 15.* 2. That there was an observable gradual decrease in the years of their lives, Shem reached to 600 years, which yet fell short of the age of the patriarchs before the flood; the three next came short of 500, the three next did not reach to 300, and after them we read not of any that attained to 200, but Terah, and not many ages after this, Moses reckoned 70 or 80 to be the utmost men ordinarily arrive at: when the earth began to be replenished, mens lives began to shorten, so that the decrease is to be imputed to the wise disposal of providence, rather than to any decay of nature; for the elects sake mens days are shortened, and being evil, it is well they are few, and attain not to the years of the lives of our fathers, *Gen. xlv. 9.* 3. That Eber, from whom the Hebrews were denominated, was the longest lived of any that were born after the flood; which perhaps was the reward of his singular piety, and strict adherence to the ways of God.

27. Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. 28. And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. 29. And Abram and Nahor took them wives; the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. 30. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. 31. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his sons son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abrams wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. 32. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

Here begins the story of Abram, whose name is famous from henceforward in both Testaments; we have here,

1. His country: Ur of the Chaldees, that was the land of his nativity, an idolatrous country where even the children of Eber themselves were degenerated. Note, those who are through grace, heirs of the land of promise, ought to remember what was the land of their nativity; what was their corrupt and sinful state by nature, the rock out of which they were hewn.

2. His relations, mentioned for his sake, and because of their interest in the following story. 1. His father was Terah, of whom it is said, *Job. xxiv. 2.* that he served other gods on tother side of the flood, so early did idolatry gain footing in the world, and so hard is it even for those that have some good principles to swim against the stream. Though it is said, ver. 26, that when Terah was 70 years old he begat Abram, Nahor, and

Haran, which seems to tell us that Abram was the eldest son of Terah, and born in his 70th year, yet by comparing ver. 32, which makes Terah to die in his 205th year, with *Acts vii. 4.* where it is said that Abram removed from Haran, when his father was dead, and chap. xii. 4, where it is said that he was but 75 years old when he removed from Haran, it appears that he was born in the 130th year of Terah, and probably was his youngest son; for in God's choices oft-times the last shall be first, and the first last. We have, 2. some account of his brethren, (1.) Nahor, out of whose family both Isaac and Jacob had their wives. (2.) Haran, the father of Lot, of whom it is here said, ver. 28, *that he died before his father Terah.* Note, children cannot be sure that they shall survive their parents, for death doth not go by seniority, taking the eldest first; *the shadow of death is without any order,* *Job x. 22.* It is likewise said that he died in Ur of the Chaldees, before the happy remove of the family out of that idolatrous country. Note, it concerns us to hasten out of our natural state lest death surprize us in it. 3. His wife was Sarai, who, some think, was the same with Iscah, the daughter of Haran. Abram himself saith of her, that she was the daughter of his father, but not the daughter of his mother, chap. xx. 12; she was 10 years younger than Abram.

3. His departure out of Ur of the Chaldees; with his father Terah, his nephew Lot, and the rest of his family, in obedience to the call of God, of which we shall read more, chap. xii. 1, &c. This chapter leaves them in Haran; or Charran, a place about the mid-way between Ur and Canaan, where they dwelt till Terah's head was laid, probably because the old man was unable, through the infirmities of age, to proceed in his journey. Many reach to Charran, and yet fall short of Canaan, they are not far from the kingdom of God, and yet never come thither.

## CHAP. XII.

*The pedigree and family of Abram we had an account of in the foregoing chapter; here the Holy Ghost enters upon his story, and; from hence forward, Abram and his seed are almost the only subject of the sacred history. In this chapter we have, 1. God's call of Abram to the land of Canaan, ver. 1, 2, 3. 2. Abram's obedience to this call, ver. 4, 5. 3. His welcome to the land of Canaan, ver. 6.—9. 4. His occasional remove into Egypt, with an account of what happened to him there. Abram's flight and fault, ver. 10.—13. Sarai's danger and deliverance, ver. 14.—20.*

1. **N**OW the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred; and from thy fathers house, unto a land that I will shew thee. 2. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

We have here the call by which Abram was removed out of the land of his nativity into the land of promise, which was designed both to try his faith and obedience, and also to separate him, and set him apart for God, and for special services and favours which were further designed. The circumstances of this call we may be somewhat helped to the knowledge of, from Stephen's speech, *Acts vii. 2.* where we are told, 1. That the God of glory appeared to him, to give him this call, appeared in such displays of his glory, as left Abram no room to doubt the divine authority of this call. God spake to him after in divers manners, but this first time, when the correspondence was to be settled, he appeared to him as the God of glory, and spake to him. 2. That this call was given him in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran; therefore we rightly read it, *The Lord had said unto Abram, viz. in Ur of the Chaldees;* and, in obedience to this call, as Stephen further relates the story, ver. 4, *he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran, or Haran, about five years, and from thence when his father was dead, by a fresh command, pursuant to the former, he removed him into the land of Canaan.* Some think Haran was in Caldea, and so was still a part of Abram's country, or he having staid there five years, began to call it his country, and to take root there till God let him know this was not the place he was intended for. Note, If God love us and have mercy in store for us, he will not suffer us to take up our rest any where short of Canaan, but will graciously repeat his calls till the good work begun be performed, and our souls repose in God only.

In the call itself we have a precept and a promise.

1. A trying precept, ver. 1. *Get thee out of thy country.* Now, 1. By this precept he was tried whether he loved God better than he loved his native soil and dearest friends, and whether he could willingly leave all to go along with God. His country was become idolatrous, his kindred and his father's house were a constant temptation to him, and he could not continue with them without danger of being infected by them, therefore *Get thee out* וְיָצֵא *vade tibi,* got thee gone with all speed, *escape for thy life,* look not behind



*behind thee*, chap. xix. 17. Note, those that are in a sinful state are concerned to make all haste possible out of it. *Get out for thyself*; so some read it, *i. e.* for thine own good. Note, those who leave their sins and turn to God, will themselves be unspeakable gainers by the change, *Prov. ix. 13.* This command, which God gave to Abram, is much the same with the Gospel call, by which all the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham are brought into covenant with God. For, (1.) Natural affection must give way to divine grace: our country is dear to us, our kindred dearer, and our father's house dearest of all, and yet they must all be hated, *Luke xiv. 26.* that is, we must love them less than Christ, hate them in comparison with him, and whenever any of these come in competition with him, those must be postponed, and the preference given to the will and honour of the Lord Jesus. (2.) Sin, and all the occasions of it, must be forsaken, and particularly bad company: we must abandon all the idols of iniquity which have been set up in our hearts, and get out of the way of temptation, plucking out even a right eye that leads us to sin, *Matth. v. 29.* willingly parting with that which is dearest to us, when we cannot keep it without hazard of our integrity. Those that resolve to keep the commandments of God must quit the society of evil doers, *Psal. cxix. 115. Acts ii. 40.* (3.) The world, and all our enjoyments in it, must be looked upon with a holy indifference and contempt, we must no longer look upon it as our country, or home, but as our inn, and must accordingly fit loose to it, and live above it, get out of it in affection.

2. By this precept he was tried whether he could trust God further than he saw him, for he must leave his own country to go to a *land that God would shew him*; he doth not say it is a land that I will give thee, only shew thee. Nor doth he tell him what land it was, or what kind of land, but he must follow God with an implicit faith, and take God's word for it in the general, tho' he had no particular securities given him, that he should be no loser by leaving his country to follow God. Note, Those that will *deal with God must deal upon trust*, we must quit the things that are seen, for the things that are not seen, and submit to the sufferings of this present time, in hopes of a glory that is yet to be revealed, *Rom. viii. for it doth not yet appear what we shall be*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. no more than it did to Abraham when God called him to a land he would shew him, so teaching him to live in a continual dependance upon his conduct, and with his eye ever towards him.

2. Here is an encouraging promise, nay, it is a complication of promises, many, and exceeding great and precious. Note, All God's precepts are attended with promises to the obedient; when he makes himself known to us as a commander, he makes himself known also as a rewarder: if we obey the command God will not fail to perform the promise. Here are six promises.

1. *I will make of thee a great nation*: when God took him from his own people, he promised to make him the head of another; he cut him off from being the branch of a wild olive, to make him the root of a good olive. This promise was, 1. A great relief to Abraham's burthen, for he had now no Child. Note, God knows how to suit his favours to the wants and necessities of his children. He that has a plaister for every sore, will provide one for that first that is most painful. 2. A great trial to Abram's faith, for his wife had been long barren, so that if he believe it must be against hope, and his faith must build purely upon that power which *can cut of stones raise up children unto Abraham*, and make them a great nation. Note, 1. God makes nations. By him they are *born at once*, *Isa. lxvi. 8.* and he speaks to build and plant them, *Jer. xviii. 9.* And (2.) if a nation be made great in wealth and power, it is God that greatens it. (3.) God can raise great nations out of *dry ground*, and can make a *little one to be a thousand*.

2. *I will bless thee*, either particularly with the blessing of fruitfulness and increase, as he had blessed Adam and Noah, or, in general, *I will bless thee* with all manner of blessings, both of the upper and nether springs: leave thy father's house, and I will give thee a father's blessing, better than that of thy progenitors. Note, Obedient believers shall be sure to inherit the blessing.

3. *I will make thy name great*: by deserting his country, he lost his name there, care not for that (saith God) but trust me, and I will make thee a greater name than ever thou couldst have had there. Having no child, he feared he should have no name, but God will make him a great nation, and so make him a great name. Note, 1. God is the fountain of honour, and from him promotion comes, 1 *Sam. ii. 8.* 2. The name of obedient believers shall certainly be celebrated, and made great: the best report is that which the elders obtained by faith, *Heb. xi. 2.*

4. *Thou shalt be a blessing*: that is, 1. Thy happiness shall be a sample of happiness, so that those who would bless their friends, shall only pray that God would make them like Abram, as *Ruth iv. 11.* Note, God's dealings with obedient believers, are so kind and gracious, that we need not desire for ourselves or our friends to be any better dealt with, that is blessedness enough. 2. Thy life shall be a blessing to the places where thou shalt sojourn. Note, good men are the blessings of their country, and it is their unspeakable honour and happiness to be made so.

5. *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.* This made it a kind of a league offensive and defensive, between

God and Abram. Abram heartily espoused God's cause, and here God promiseth to interest himself in his; 1. He promiseth to be a friend to his friends, to take kindnesses shewn to him as done to himself, and to recompense them accordingly. God will take care that none be losers at long run, by any service done for his people, even a cup of cold water shall be rewarded. 2. He promiseth to appear against his enemies; there were those that hated and cursed even Abram himself; but while their causeless curses could not hurt Abram, God's righteous curse would certainly overtake and ruin them, *Numb. xxiv. 9.* This is a good reason why we should bless them that curse us, because it is enough that God will curse them, *Psal. xxxviii. 13, 14, 15.*

6. *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*: this was the promise that crowned all the rest, for it points at the Messiah, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. Note, 1. Jesus Christ is the great blessing of the world, the greatest that ever the world was blessed with: he is a family blessing, by him salvation is brought to the house, *Luke xix. 9.* when we reckon up our family blessings, let us put Christ in the imprimis, as the blessing of blessings. But how are all the families of the earth blessed in Christ, when so many are strangers to him? Answer 1. All that are blessed are blessed in him, *Act. iv. 12.* 2. All that believe, of what family soever they are, shall be blessed in him. 3. Some of all the families of the earth are blessed in him. 4. There are some blessings which all the families of the earth are blessed with in Christ, for the gospel salvation is a common salvation.

2. It is a great honour to be related to Christ: this made Abram's name great, that the Messiah was to descend from his loins, much more than that he should be the father of many nations. It was Abram's honour to be his father by nature, it will be ours to be his brethren by grace, *Matth. xii. 50.*

4. So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him: and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

Here is 1. Abram's removal out of his country, out of Ur first, and afterwards out of Haran, in compliance with the call of God, so Abram departed: he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but did as he was bidden, not *conferring with flesh and blood*, *Gal. i. 15, 16.* His obedience was speedy, and without delay, submissive, and without dispute, for he *went out, not knowing whither he went*, *Heb. xi. 8.* but knowing whom he followed, and under whose conduct he went. Thus God called him to his feet, *Isa. xli. 2.*

2. His age when he removed; he was 75 years old, an age when he should rather have had rest and settlement; but if God will have him to begin the world again, now in his old age he will submit. Here is an instance of an old convert. 3. the company and cargo that he took with him.

1. He took his wife and his nephew Lot with him, not by force and against their wills, but by persuasions; Sarai, his wife, would be sure to go with him; God had joined them together, and nothing should put them asunder. If Abram leave all to follow God, Sarai will leave all to follow Abram, tho' neither of them knew whither. And it was a mercy to Abram to have such a companion in his travels, a help meet for him. Note, It is very comfortable when husband and wife agree together in the way to Heaven. Lot also, his kinsman, was influenced by Abram's good example, who was perhaps his guardian after the death of his father, and he was willing to go along with him too. Note, Those that go to Canaan need not go alone, for tho' few find the strait gate, blessed be God some do; and it is our wisdom to go with those with whom God is, (*Zech. viii. 23.*) where-ever they go.

2. They took all their effects with them: *All their substance* and moveable goods, *that they had gathered*. For, (1.) With themselves they would give up their all to be at God's dispose, would keep back no part of the price, but venture all in one bottom, knowing it was a good bottom. (2.) They would furnish themselves with that which was requisite, both for the service of God, and the supply of their family in the country whither they were going. To have thrown away his substance, because God had promised to bless him, had been to tempt God, not to trust him. (3.) They would not be under any temptation to return, therefore they leave not a hoof behind, lest that should make them *mindful of the country from which they came out*.

3. They took with them the *souls that they had gotten*, that is, 1. The servant they had bought, which were part of their substance, but are called souls, to mind masters that their poor servants have souls, precious souls, which they ought to take care of, and provide food convenient for. 2. The profelytes they had made and persuaded to attend the worship of the true God, and to go with them to Canaan: the souls which (as one of the Rabbins expresseth it) they had *gathered under the wings of the divine majesty*.

Note,



Note, Those who serve and follow God themselves, should do all they can to bring others to serve and follow him too. Those souls they are said to have gained; we must reckon ourselves true gainers, if we can but win souls to Christ.

Lastly, here is their happy arrival at their journey's end, *They went forth to go into the land of Canaan*, so they did before, chap. xi. 31. and then took up short, but now they held on their way, and to the land of Canaan they came, by the good hand of their God upon them, and by a fresh revelation were told, this was the land God promised to shew them. They were not discouraged by the difficulties they met with in their way, nor diverted by the delights they met with, but *pressed forwards*. Note, 1. Those that set out for Heaven must persevere to the end, still reaching forth to those things that are before. 2. That which we undertake in obedience to God's command, and a humble attendance upon his providence will certainly succeed, and end with comfort at last.

6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. 8. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. 9. And Abram journeyed, going on still towards the south.

One would have expected that Abram having had such an extraordinary call to Canaan, some great event should have followed upon his arrival there, that he should have been introduced with all possible marks of honour and respect, and that the kings of Canaan should immediately have surrendered their crowns to him, and done him homage: no, he comes not with observation, little notice is taken of him, for still God will have him to live by faith, and to look upon Canaan even when he was in it as a land of promise: therefore observe here,

1. How little comfort he had in the land he came to, for,

(1.) He had it not to himself, *the Canaanite was then in the land*. He found the country peopled and possessed by Canaanites, who were likely to be but bad neighbours and worse landlords; and for ought appears he could not have ground to pitch his tent on, but by their permission: Thus the accursed Canaanites seemed to be in better circumstances than blessed Abraham. Note, The children of this world have commonly more of it than God's children.

(2.) He had not a settlement in it. He *passed through the land*, ver. 6. He *removed to a mountain*, ver. 8. He *journeyed going on still*, ver. 9. observe here, 1. That sometimes it is the Lot of good men to be unsettled, and obliged oft to remove their habitation. Holy David had his wanderings, his flittings, Psal. lvi. 8. 2. Our removes in this world are often into various conditions. Abram sojourned first in a plain, ver. 6. then in a mountain, ver. 8. God has set the one over against the other. 3. All good people must look upon themselves as strangers and sojourners in this world, and by faith sit loose to it as a strange country. So Abram did, *Heb. xi. 8*. 4. While we are here in this present state, we must be journeying and going on still, from strength to strength, as having not yet attained.

2. How much comfort he had in the God he followed, when he could have little satisfaction in converse with the Canaanites whom he found there, he had abundance of pleasure in communion with that God who brought him thither, and did not leave him. Communion with God is kept up by the word and prayer, and by these, according to the methods of that dispensation, Abram's communion with God was kept up in the land of his pilgrimage.

(1.) God appeared to Abram, probably in a vision, and spoke to him good words, and comfortable words, *Unto thy seed will I give this land*. Note, 1. No place or condition of life can shut us out from the comforts of God's gracious visits. Abraham is a sojourner, unsettled, among Canaanites, and yet here also he meets with him that lives and sees him. Enemies may part us and our tents, us and our altars, but not us and our God. Nay, 2. Those that faithfully follow God in a way of duty, tho' he lead them from their friends, he will himself make up that loss by his gracious appearances to them. 3. God's promises are sure and satisfying to all those who conscientiously observe and obey his precepts; and those who in compliance with God's call, leave or lose any thing that is dear to them, shall be sure of something else abundantly better in lieu of it. Abram had left the *land of his nativity*, well, faith God, I will give thee this land, *Matth. xix. 29*. 4. God reveals himself and his favours to his people by degrees: before, he had promised to shew him this land, now to give it him: as grace is growing, so is comfort. 5. It is comfortable to have land of God's giving, not by providence only, but by promise. 6. Mercies to the children are mercies to the parents: I will give it, not to thee, but to thy seed; it is a grant in reversion, to his seed, which, yet it should seem Abram understood

also as a grant to himself of a better land, in reversion, of which this was a type; for he looked for a heavenly country, *Heb. xi. 16*.

(2.) Abram attended on God in his instituted ordinances. He built an altar unto the Lord who appeared to him, *ver. 7. builded an altar, and called on the name of the Lord*, ver. 8. Now consider this, 1. As done upon a special occasion; when God appeared to him, then and there built an altar, with an eye to the God that appeared to him: Thus he returned God's visit, and kept up his correspondence with Heaven, as one that resolved it should not fall on his side: thus he acknowledged with thankfulness God's kindness to him in making him that gracious visit and promise: and thus he testified his confidence in, and dependence upon, the word which God had spoken. Note, An active believer can heartily bless God for a promise which he doth not yet see the performance of, and build an altar to the honour of God, that appears to him, tho' he doth not yet appear for him. 2. As his constant practice, whithersoever he removed: As soon as Abram was got to Canaan, tho' he was but a stranger and sojourner there, yet he set up, and kept up the worship of God in his family; and where-ever he had a tent, God had an altar, and that an altar sanctified by prayer. For he minded not only the ceremonial part of religion, the offering of sacrifice, but made conscience of the natural duty of *seeking to his God, and calling on his name, that spiritual sacrifice with which God is well pleased: he preached concerning the name of the Lord*, i. e. he instructed his family and neighbours in the knowledge of the true God, and his holy religion. *The souls he had gotten in Haran*, being disciplined, must be further taught. Note, Those that would approve themselves the children of faithful Abram, and would inherit the blessing of Abram, must make conscience of keeping up the solemn worship of God, particularly in their families, according to the example of Abram: the way of family worship is a good old way, is no novel invention, but the ancient usage of all the saints. Abram was very rich, and had a numerous family, was now unsettled, and in the midst of enemies, and yet where-ever he pitched his tent, he built an altar; where-ever we go let us not fail to take our religion along with us.

10. And there was a famine in the land: And Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. 11. And it came to pass when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon. 12. Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. 13. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

Here is, 1. A famine in the land of Canaan, *a grievous famine; that fruitful land turned into barrenness*, not only to punish the iniquity of the Canaanites that dwell therein, but to exercise the faith of Abram that sojourned therein: and a very fore trial it was: it tried what he would think (1.) of God that brought him hither, whether he would not be ready to say with his murmuring seed, that he was brought forth to be *killed with hunger*, *Exod. xvi. 3*. Nothing short of a strong faith could keep up good thoughts of God under such a providence. (2.) Of the land of promise; whether he would think the grant of it worth the accepting, and a valuable consideration for the relinquishing of his own country, when, for ought now appeared, it was a land that *eat up the inhabitants*: now he was tried whether he could trust the God that brought him to Canaan, to maintain him there, and rejoice in him as the *God of his salvation*, when the *fig-tree did not blossom*, *Hab. iii. 17, 18*. Note, (1.) Strong faith is commonly exercised with divers temptations, that it may be found to praise and honour and glory, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. (2.) It pleases God sometimes to try those with great afflictions that are but young beginners in religion. (3.) It is possible for a man to be in the way of duty, and in the way to happiness, and yet meet with great troubles and disappointments. 2. Abram's remove into Egypt upon occasion of this famine. See how wisely God provides, that there should be plenty in one place when there was scarcity in another, that as members of the great body we may not say to one another, *I have no need of you*. God's providence took care there should be supply in Egypt, and Abram's prudence made use of the opportunity; for we tempt God, and do not trust him, if, in time of distress, we use not the means he hath graciously provided for our preservation; we must not expect needless miracles. But that which is especially observable here to the praise of Abram is, that he did not offer to return upon this occasion to the country from which he came out, nor so much as towards it: The land of his nativity lay north-east from Canaan, and therefore when he must for a time quit Canaan he chuses to go to Egypt which lay south-west, the contrary way, that he might not so much as seem to look back: see *Heb. xi. 15, 16*. Further observe, when he went down into Egypt it was to sojourn there, not to dwell there. Note, 1. Though providence for a time may cast us into bad places, yet we ought to tarry there no longer than needs must;



we may sojourn there where we may not settle. 2. A good man, while he is on this side Heaven, wherever he is, he is but a sojourner.

3. A great fault which Abram was guilty of in denying his wife, and pretending that she was his sister. The scripture is impartial in relating the miscarriages of the most celebrated saints, not for our imitation, but our admonition; that he *who thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall*. 1. His fault was dissembling his relation to Sarai, and equivocating concerning it, and teaching his wife (and probably all his attendants) to do so too. What he said was in a sense true, chap. xx. 12. but with a purpose to deceive; he so concealed a further truth, as in effect to deny it, and to expose thereby both his wife and the Egyptians to sin. 2. That which was at the bottom of it was a jealous, timorous fancy he had, that some or other of the Egyptians would be so charmed with the beauty of Sarai, Egypt producing few such beauties, that if they should know he was her husband, they would find some way or other to take him off, that they might marry her. He presumes, they would rather be guilty of murder than adultery, such a heinous crime was it then accounted, and such a sacred regard had to the marriage-bond: hence he infers, without any good reason, *They will kill me*. Note, The fear of man brings a snare, and many are driven to sin by the dread of death, *Luke xii. 4, 5*. The grace Abram was most eminent for was, faith, and yet he thus fell through unbelief and distrust of the divine providence, even after God had appeared to him twice. Alas, what will become of the willows when the cedars are thus shaken!

14. And it came to pass, that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman, that she was very fair. 15. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and she-asses, and men-servants, and maid-servants, and she-asses, and camels. 17. And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai Abram's wife. 18. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? 19. Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. 20. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

Here is, 1. The danger Sarai was in of having her chastity violated by the king of Egypt. And without doubt the peril of sin is the greatest peril we can be in. *Pharaoh's princes* (his pimps rather) *saw her*, and observing what a comely woman she was, they *commended her before Pharaoh*; not for that which was really her praise, her virtue, and modesty, her faith, and piety, those were no excellencies in their eyes, but they admired her beauty, which they thought too good for the embraces of a subject, and therefore recommended her to the king, and she was presently taken into Pharaoh's house, as Esther into the Seraglio of Ahasuerus, *Esther ii. 8*. in order to her being taken into his bed. Now we must not look upon Sarai as standing fair for preferment, but as entering into temptation, and the occasions of it were her own beauty, which is a snare to many, and Abram's equivocation, which is a sin that commonly is an inlet to much sin. While Sarai was in this danger, Abram fared the better for her sake; Pharaoh gave him sheep, and oxen, &c. (ver. 16.) to gain his consent with her whom they supposed his sister. We cannot think that Abram expected this when he came down into Egypt, much less that he had an eye to it when he denied his wife, but God brought good out of evil. And thus *the wealth of the sinner* proves, some way or other, *laid up for the just*. 2. The deliverance of Sarai from this danger. For if God did not deliver us many a time by prerogative, out of those straits and distresses which we bring ourselves into by our own sin and folly, and which therefore we could not expect any deliverance from by promise, we should soon be ruined, nay, we had been ruined long before this. He deals not with us according to our deserts.

1. God chastised Pharaoh, and so prevented the progress of his sin. Note, Those are happy chastisements that hinder us in a sinful way, and effectually bring us to our duty, and particularly to the duty of restoring that which we have wrongfully taken and detained. Observe, not Pharaoh only, but his house was plagued; probably, those princes especially that had commended Sarai to Pharaoh. Note, Partners in sin are justly made partners in the punishment. Those that serve others lusts must expect to share in their plagues. We are not told particularly what these plagues were, but doubtless there was something in the plagues themselves, or some explication added to them sufficient to convince them that it was for Sarai's sake they were thus plagued.

2. Pharaoh reproved Abram, and then dismissed him with respect. (1.) The reproof was calm, but very just, *What is this that thou hast done?* What an ill thing! how unbecoming a wife

and good man? Note, if those that profess religion do that which is unfair and disingenuous, especially if they say that which borders upon a lie, they must expect to hear of it, and have reason to thank those that will tell them of it. We find a prophet of the Lord justly reprov'd and upbraided by a heathen ship-master, *Jonas i. 6*. Pharaoh reasons with him, *Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?* intimating, that if he had known that, he would not have taken her into his house. Note, It is a fault too common among good people to entertain suspicions of others beyond what there is cause for. We have often found more of virtue, honour, and conscience in some people than we thought there was, and it ought to be a pleasure to us to be thus disappointed, as Abram was here, who found Pharaoh to be a better man than he expected. Charity teaches us to hope the best.

(2.) The Dismissal was kind, and very generous. He returned him his wife without offering any injury to her honour, ver. 18. *Behold thy wife, take her*. Note, Those that would prevent sin, must remove the temptation, or get out of the way of it. He also sent him away in peace, and was so far from any design to kill him, as he apprehended, that he took particular care of him. Note, We often perplex and ensnare ourselves with fears which soon appear to have been altogether groundless. We many a time fear, *where no fear is*. We fear the *fury of the oppressor*, as *tho' he were ready to destroy*, when really there is no danger, *Isa. li. 13*. It had been more for Abram's credit and comfort to have told the truth at first, for after all, *honesty is the best policy*. Nay, it is said, ver. 20. *Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him*, that is, 1. He charged them not to injure him in any thing. Note, It is not enough for those in authority that they do no hurt themselves, but they must restrain their servants and those about them from doing hurt. Or, 2. He appointed them, when Abram was disposed to return home, after the famine, to conduct him safe out of the country, as his convoy. Probably he was alarmed by the plagues, ver. 17. and inferred from them, that Abram was a particular favourite of Heaven, and therefore for fear of the like, took special care he should receive no injury in his country. Note, God has often raised up friends for his people, by making men know it is at their peril if they hurt them. It is a dangerous thing to offend Christ's little ones, *Matth. xviii. 6*. To this passage, among others, the Psalmist refers, *Psal. cv. 13, 14, 15*. *He reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed*. Perhaps if Pharaoh had not sent him away he would have been tempted to stay in Egypt, and to forget the land of promise. Note, Sometimes God makes use of the enemies of his people, to convince them, and mind them that this world is not their rest, but they must think of departing. Lastly, Observe a resemblance betwixt this deliverance of Abram out of Egypt, and the deliverance of his seed thence four-hundred and thirty years after Abram went into Egypt on occasion of a famine, so did they; he was fetched out with great plagues on Pharaoh, so were they. As Abram was dismissed by Pharaoh, and enriched with the spoil of the Egyptians, so were they. For God's care of his people is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

### C H A P. XIII.

In this chapter we have a further account concerning Abram, 1. In general, of his condition and behaviour in the land of promise, which was now the land of his pilgrimage. 1. His removals, ver. 1, 3, 4, 18. 2. His riches, ver. 2. 3. His devotion, ver. 4, 18. 2. A particular account of a quarrel that happened between him and Lot. (1.) The unhappy occasion of their strife, ver. 5, 6. (2.) The parties concerned in the strife, with the aggravation of it, ver. 7. (3.) The taking up of the quarrel, by the prudence of Abram, ver. 8, 9. (4.) Lot's departure from Abram to the plain of Sodom, ver. 10—14. (5.) God's appearance to Abram to confirm the promise of the land of Canaan to him, ver. 14—17.

1. **A**ND Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him into the south. 2. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 3. And he went on his journeys from the south, even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai; 4. Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

Here is, 1. Abram's return out of Egypt, ver. 1. He came himself, and brought all his with him back again to Canaan. Note, Though there may be occasion to go sometimes into places of temptation, yet we must hasten out of them as soon as possible. See *Ruth i. 6*.

2. His wealth, ver. 2. *He was very rich*. He was very heavy, so the Hebrew word signifies. For riches are a burthen, and they that will be rich do but load themselves with thick clay; *Hab. ii. 6*. There is a burthen of care in getting them, fear in keeping them, temptation in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burthen of account at last to be given up concerning them. Great possessions do but make men heavy and unwieldy.

Abram



Abram was not only rich in faith and good works, and in the promises, but he was *rich in cattle, and in silver and gold*. Note, 1. God in his providence sometimes makes good men rich men, and teaches them how to abound as well as how to suffer want. 2. The riches of good men are the fruits of God's blessing. God had said to Abram, *I will bless thee*, and that blessing made him rich without sorrow, *Prov. x. 22*. 3. True piety will very well consist with great prosperity. Though it is *hard for a rich man to get to Heaven, yet it is not impossible*, *Mark x. 23, 24*. Abram was very rich, and yet very religious. Nay, as piety is a friend to outward prosperity, *1 Tim. iv. 8*. So outward prosperity, if well managed, is an ornament to piety, and an opportunity of doing so much the more good.

3. His remove to Beth-el, ver. 3, 4. Thither he went not only because there he had formerly had his tent, and he was willing to go among his old acquaintance. But because there he had formerly had his altar, and though the altar was gone, probably he himself having taken it down, when he left the place, lest it should be polluted by the idolatrous Canaanites, yet he *came to the place of the altar*, either to revive the remembrance of the sweet communion he had had with God at that place, or perhaps to pay the vows he had there made to God when he undertook his journey into Egypt. Long after God sent Jacob to this same place on that errand, *chap. xxxv. 1*. *Go up to Beth-el where thou vowedst the vow*. We have need to be minded, and should take all occasions to mind ourselves of our solemn vows, and perhaps the place where they were made, may help to bring them fresh to mind, and it may therefore do us good to visit it.

4. His devotion there. His altar was gone, so that he could not offer sacrifice, but he *called on the name of the Lord*, as he had done, *chap. xii. 8*. Note, 1. All God's people are praying people. You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a living Christian without prayer. 2. Those that would approve themselves upright with their God must be constant and persevering in the services of religion. Abram did leave his religion behind him in Egypt, as many do in their travels. 3. When we cannot do *what we would*, we must make conscience of doing *what we can* in the acts of devotion. When we want an altar, let us not be wanting in prayer, but wherever we are, call on the name of the Lord.

5. And Lot also which went with Abram had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. 7. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abrams cattle, and the herdmen of Lots cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. 8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we be brethren. 9. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself I pray thee from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right: or if thou depart to the right-hand, then I will go to the left.

We have here an unhappy falling out between Abram and Lot, who had hitherto been inseparable companions. See ver. 1. and *chap. xii. 4*. but now parted.

1. The occasion of their quarrel was their riches. We read, ver. 2. How rich Abram was, now here we are told, ver. 5. that Lot, which went with Abram, was rich too, and therefore God blessed him with riches, because he went with Abram. Note, 1. It is good being in good company, and going with those with whom God is, *Zech. viii. 23*. 2. Those that are partners with God's people in their obedience and sufferings shall be sharers with them in their joys and comforts, *Isa. lxvi. 10*. Now, they both being very rich, *the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell comfortably and peaceably together*. So that their riches may be considered.

(1.) As setting them at a distance one from another; because the place was too strait for them, and they had not room for their flocks, it was necessary they should live asunder. Note, Every comfort in this world has it's cross attending it. Business is a comfort, but it has this inconvenience in it, that it allows us not the society of those we love, so oft, nor so long, as we could wish.

(2.) As setting them at variance one with another. Note, Riches are often an occasion of strife and contention among relations and neighbours. This is one of those *foolish and hurtful lusts which they that will be rich fall into*, *1 Tim. vi. 9*. Riches not only afford matter for contention, and are the things most commonly striven about, but they also stir up a spirit of contention, by making people proud and covetous. *Meum* and *tuum* are the great make-bates of the world. Poverty, and travel, wants, and wanderings, could not separate between Abram and Lot, but riches did it. Friends are soon lost; but God is a friend from whose love neither the height of prosperity nor the depth of adversity shall separate us.

2. The immediate instruments of the quarrel were their servants. The strife began between *the herdmen of Abrams cattle, and the herdmen of Lots cattle*, (ver. 7.) it is likely they strove which should have the better pasture, or the better water, and both interested their masters in the quarrel. Note, Bad servants often make a great deal of mischief in families, by their pride and passion, their lying, slandering, and tale-bearing. It is a very wicked thing for servants to do ill offices between relations and neighbours, and to sow discord; those that do so are the devils agents, and their masters worst enemies.

3. The aggravation of the quarrel was, that *the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land*; this made the quarrel, (1.) Very dangerous; if Abram and Lot cannot agree to feed their flocks together, it is well if the common enemy do not come upon them, and plunder them both. Note, The division of families and churches often prove the ruin of them. (2.) Very scandalous. No doubt, the eyes of all the neighbours were upon them, especially because of the singularity of their religion, and the extraordinary sanctity they professed, and notice would soon be taken of this quarrel, and improvement made of it to their reproach by the Canaanites and Perizzites. Note, The quarrels of professors are the reproach of profession, and give occasion as much as any thing to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

4. The taking up of this quarrel was very happy. It is best to preserve the peace that it be not broken, but the next best is, if differences do happen, with all speed to accommodate them, and quench the fire that is broke out. The motion for staying this strife was made by Abram, though he was the senior and superiour relation, ver. 8.

1. His petition for peace was very affectionate. *Let there be no strife, I pray thee*. Abram here shews himself to be a man, (1.) Of a cool spirit, that had the command of his passion, and knew how to turn away wrath with a soft answer. Those that would keep the peace must never render railing for railing. (2.) Of a condescending spirit; he was willing to beseech even his inferiour to be at peace, and made the first overture of reconciliation. Conquerors reckon it their glory to give peace by power, and it is no less so to give peace by the meekness of wisdom. Note, The people of God should always approve themselves a peaceable people; whatever others are for, they must be for peace.

2. His plea for peace was very cogent. (1.) Let there not be a strife *between me and thee*. Let the Canaanites and Perizzites contend about trifles, but let not thee and me fall out who know better things, and look for a better country. Note, Professors of religion should of all others be careful to avoid contention. *You shall not be so*, *Luke xxii. 24, 26*. *We have no such custom*, *1 Cor. i. 11, 16*. Let there be no strife *between me and thee*, who have lived together, and loved one another so long. Note, The remembrance of old friendships should quickly put an end to new quarrels, which at any time happen. (2.) Let it be remembered that *we are brethren*, *Heb. We are men brethren*; a double argument, 1. We are men. And as men, we are mortal creatures, we may die to morrow, and are concerned to be found in peace; we are rational creatures, and should be ruled by reason. We are men, and not brutes, men, and not children; we are sociable creatures, let us be so then. 2. We are brethren. Men of the same nature, of the same kindred and family, of the same religion. Companions in obedience, companions in patience. Note, The consideration of our relation to each other as brethren should always prevail to moderate our passions, and either to prevent, or put an end to our contentions. Brethren should *love as brethren*.

3. His proposal for peace was very fair. Many who profess to be for peace, yet will do nothing towards it, but Abram hereby approved himself a real friend to peace, that he proposed an unexceptionable expedient for the preserving of it, ver. 9. *Is not the whole land before thee? q. d. Why should we quarrel for room, while there is room enough for us both?* 1. He concludes they must part, and is very desirous they might part friends. *Separate thyself I pray thee from me*. What could be expressed more affectionately? He doth not expel him, and force him away, but advises that he should separate himself. Nor doth he charge him to depart, but humbly desires him to withdraw. Note, Those that have power to command, yet sometimes for love's sake, and peace sake, should rather beseech, as Paul, *Philemon*, ver. 8, 9. When the great God condescends to beseech us, we may well afford to beseech one another, to *be reconciled*, *2 Cor. v. 20*. 2. He offers him a sufficient share of the land they were in. Tho' God had promised Abram to give this land to his seed, *chap. xii. 7*. and it doth not appear that ever any such promise was made to Lot, which Abram might have insisted on to the total exclusion of Lot, yet he allows him to come in partner with him, and tenders an equal share to one that had not an equal right; and will not make God's promise to patronize his quarrel, nor under the protection of that, put any hardship on his kinsman. 3. He gives him his choice, and offers to take up with his leavings. *If thou wilt take the left hand I will go to the right*. There was all the reason in the world that Abram should chuse first, yet he recedes from his right. Note, It is a noble conquest to be willing to yield for peace sake, it is the conquest of our selves, and our own pride and passion, *Matth. v. 39, 40*. It is not only the punctilios of honour, but even interest itself, that in many cases must be sacrificed to peace.

10. And



10. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. 11. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13. But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the LORD, exceedingly.

We have here the choice that Lot made when he parted from Abram; upon this occasion one would have expected, 1. That he should have expressed an unwillingness to part from Abram, and that at least he should have done it with reluctance. 2. That he should have been so civil as to have remitted the choice back again to Abram. But we find not any instance of deference or respect to his uncle in the whole management. Abram having offered him the choice, without complement he accepted it, and made his election. Passion and selfishness make men rude. Now in the choice which Lot made we may observe,

1. How much he had an eye to the goodness of the land. *He beheld all the plain of Jordan*, the flat country in which Sodom stood that it was admirably well watered every where, (and perhaps the strife had been about water which made him particularly fond of that convenience) and so *Lot chose him all that plain*, ver. 10, 11. That valley which was like the garden of Eden itself now yielded him a most pleasant prospect, it was in his eye beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, and therefore he doubted not but it would yield him a comfortable settlement, and that in such a fruitful soil he should certainly thrive and grow very rich, and this was all he looked at. But what came of it? Why, the next news we hear of him is, that he is in the briars among them, he and his carried captive; while he lived among them, he vexed his righteous soul with their conversation, and never had good day with them, till at last God fired the town over his head, and forced him to the mountain for safety, who chose the plain for wealth and pleasure. Note, Sensual choice are sinful choices, and seldom speed well. Those that in chusing relations, callings, dwellings, or settlements, are guided and governed by the lusts of the flesh, the luits of the eye, or the pride of life, and consult not the interests of their souls and their religion, cannot expect God's presence with them, nor his blessing upon them, but are commonly disappointed even in that which they principally aimed at, and miss of that which they promised themselves satisfaction in. In all our choices this principle should over-rule us, That *that is best for us which is best for our souls*.

2. How little he considered the badness of the inhabitants. *But the men of Sodom are wicked*, ver. 13. Note, 1. Tho' all are sinners, yet some are greater sinners than others; the men of Sodom were sinners of the first magnitude, *sinners before the Lord*, i. e. impudent daring sinners, they were so to a proverb, hence we read of those that *declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not*, Isa. iii. 9. 2. That some sinners are the worse for living in a good land. So the Sodomites were, for *this was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness*; and all these were supported by the great plenty their country afforded, *Ezek. xvi. 49. Thus the prosperity of fools destroys them*. 3. That God often gives great plenty to great sinners. Filthy Sodomites dwell in a city, in a fruitful plain, while faithful Abram and his pious family dwell in tents upon the barren mountains. 4. When wickedness is come to the height, ruin is not far off. Exceeding sins are sure prefaces of approaching judgments. Now Lot's coming to dwell among the Sodomites may be considered, 1. As a great mercy to them, and a likely means of bringing them to repentance; for now they had a prophet among them, and a preacher of righteousness, whom, if they had hearkened to, they might have been reformed, and the ruin prevented. Note, God sends preachers before he sends destroyers, for he is not willing that any should perish. 2. As a great affliction to Lot, who was not only grieved to see their wickedness (2 Pet. ii. 7, 8.) but was molested and persecuted by them, because he would not do as they did. Note, It has often been the vexatious Lot of good men to live among wicked neighbours, to *sojourn in Mesek*, Psal. cxx. 5. and it cannot but be the more grievous, if, as Lot here, they have brought it upon themselves by an unadvised choice.

14. And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, north-ward, and south-ward, and east-ward, and west-ward. 15. For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. 16. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. 17. Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee. 18.

Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

We have here an account of a gracious visit which God made to Abram, to confirm the promise to him and his. Observe, 1. When it was that God renewed and ratified the promise *after that Lot was separated from him*, that is, (1.) After the quarrel was over, for those are best prepared for the visits of divine grace, whose spirits are calm and sedate, and not ruffled with any passion. (2.) After Abram's humble self-denying condescensions to Lot for the preserving of peace. God came to him with this token to his favour. Note, God will abundantly make up in spiritual peace, what we lose for the preserving of neighbourly peace. When Abram had willingly offered Lot one half of his right, God came and confirmed the whole to him. (3.) After he had lost the comfortable society of his kinsman, by whose departure his hands were weakened, and his heart saddened, then God came to him, with these good words, and comfortable words. Note, Communion with God may, at any time, serve to make up the want of conversation with our friends, when our relations are separated from us, yet God is not. (4.) After Lot had chosen that pleasant, fruitful vale, and was gone to take possession of it, lest Abram should be tempted to envy him, and to repent that he had given him the choice. God comes to him, and assures him, that what he had should remain to him, and *his heirs for ever*; so that tho' Lot perhaps had the better land, yet Abram had the better title; Lot had the paradise, such as it was, but Abram had the promise, and the event soon made it appear, that however it seemed now, Abram had really the better part. See *Job xxii. 20.* God owned Abram after his strife with Lot as the churches did Paul after his strife with Barnabas, *Acts xv. 39, 40.*

2. The promises themselves which God now comforted and enriched Abram with. Two things he assures himself of; a good land, and a numerous issue to enjoy it.

1. Here is the grant of a good land, a land famous above all lands, for it was to be the holy land, and Immanuel's land; this is the land here spoken of.

(1.) God here shews Abram the land as he had promised, *chap. xii. 1.* and afterwards he shewed it to Moses from the top of Pisgah. *Lot had lifted up his eyes, and beheld the plain of Jordan*, ver. 10. and he was gone to enjoy what he saw, come, saith God to Abram, *now lift thou up thine eyes and look, and see thy own*. Note, That which God has to shew us is infinitely better and more desirable than any thing that the world has to offer to our view. The prospects of an eye of faith are much more rich and beautiful than those of an eye of sense. Those for whom the heavenly Canaan is designed in the other world have sometimes by faith a comfortable prospect of it in their present state, for we look at the *things that are not seen*, as real tho' distant.

(2.) He secures this land to him and *his seed for ever*, ver. 15. *to thee will I give it*: and again, ver. 17. *I will give it unto thee*, every repetition of the promise is a ratification of it. *To thee and thy seed*, not to Lot, and his seed; they were not to have their inheritance in this land, and therefore providence so ordered it that he should be separated from Abram first, and then the grant confirmed to him and his seed; thus God often brings good out of evil, and makes mens sins and follies subservient to his own will and holy counsels. *To thee and thy seed*, to thee to sojourn in as a stranger, to thy seed to dwell and rule in as proprietors. *To thee*, that is, *to thy seed*. The granting it to him and his for ever, intimates that it was typical of the heavenly Canaan, which is given to the spiritual seed of Abram for ever, Heb. xi. 14.

(3.) He gives him livery and seisin of it, tho' it was a reversion, ver. 17. *Arise, walk through the land*. Enter and take possession, survey the parcels, and it will appear better than upon a distant prospect. Note, God is willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of his covenant, and the inestimable worth of covenant blessings. *Go, walk about Sion*, Psal. xlviii. 12.

2. Here is the promise of a numerous issue to replenish this good land, so that it should never be lost for want of heirs, ver. 16. *I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth*, i. e. they shall increase incredibly, and take them together they shall be such a great multitude as no man can number. They were so in Solomon's time, 1 Kings iv. 20. *Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude*. This God here gives him the promise of. Note, The same God that provides the inheritance provides the heirs. He that has prepared the holy land, prepares the holy seed; he that gives glory gives grace to make meet for glory. Lastly, We are told what Abram did when God had thus confirmed the promise to him, ver. 12. 1. *He removed his tent*. God bid him *walk through the land*, that is, do not think of fixing in it, but expect to be always unsettled, and walking through it to a better Canaan, in compliance with God's will herein *he removes his tent*, conforming himself to the condition of a pilgrim. 2. *He builded there an altar*, in token of his thankfulness to God for the kind visit he had made him. Note, When God meets us with gracious promises, he expects that we should attend him with our humble praises.



## C H A P. XIV.

We have four things in the story of this chapter. 1. A war with the king of Sodom, and his allies, ver. 1,—11. 2. The captivity of Lot in that war, ver. 12. 3. Abram's rescue of Lot from that captivity, with the victory he obtained over the conquerors, ver. 13,—16. 4. Abram's return from that expedition, ver. 17, with an account of what passed, 1. Between him and the king of Salem, ver. 18,—20. 2. Between him and the king of Sodom, ver. 21,—24. So that here we have that promise to Abram in part fulfilled, that God would make his name great.

1. **A**ND it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations. 2. That these made war with Berah king of Sodom, and with Birsah king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela which is Zoar. 3. All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt-sea. 4. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5. And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim. 6. And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness. 7. And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar. 8. And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim. 9. With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar: four kings with five. 10. And the vale of Siddim was full of slime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there: and they that remained fled to the mountain. 11. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. 12. And they took Lot Abrams brothers son (who dwelt in Sodom) and his goods, and departed.

We have here an account of the first war that ever we read of in scripture, which (though the wars of the nations make the greatest figure in history) we had not had the record of if Abram and Lot had not been concerned in it. Now concerning this war we may observe,

1. The parties engaged in it. The invaders were four kings, two of them no less than kings of Shinar and Elam, Caldea and Persia, yet probably not the sovereign princes of those great kingdoms in their own persons, but either officers under them, or rather the heads and leaders of some colonies which came out of those great nations, and settled themselves near Sodom, but retained the names of the countries from which they had their original. The invaded were the kings of five cities that lay near together in the plain of Jordan, Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. Four of them are named, but not the fifth, the king of Bela, either because he was much more mean and inconsiderable, or because he was much more wicked and inglorious than the rest, and worthy to be forgotten.

2. The occasion of this war was the revolt of the five kings from under the government of Chedorlaomer. Twelve years they served him. Small joy they had of their fruitful land, while thus they were tributaries to a foreign power, and could not call what they had their own. Rich countries are a desirable prey, and idle luxurious countries are an easy prey to growing greatness. The Sodomites were the posterity of Canaan whom Noah had pronounced a servant to Shem, from whom Elam descended, thus soon did that prophecy begin to be fulfilled. In the thirteenth year beginning to be weary of their subjection they rebelled, denied their tribute, and attempted to shake off the yoke and retrieve their ancient liberties. In the fourteenth year after some pause and preparation Chedorlaomer, in conjunction with his allies, set himself to chastise the rebels, and reduce the revolted, and since he could not have it otherwise, to fetch hence his tribute upon the point of his sword. Note, pride, covetousness, and ambition, are the lusts from which wars, and fightings come. To those insatiable idols the blood of thousands has been sacrificed.

3. The progress and success of the war. The four kings laid the neighbouring countries waste, and enriched themselves with the spoil of them, ver. 5, 6, 7, upon the alarm of which it had been the wisdom of the king of Sodom to submit, and desire condi-

tions of peace, for how could he grapple with an enemy thus flushed with victory. But he would rather venture the utmost extremity than yield, and it sped accordingly, *quos Deus destruet eos dementat*.

1. The forces of the king of Sodom and his allies were routed, and it should seem many of them perished in the slime-pits, who had escaped the sword, ver. 10. In all places we are surrounded with deaths of various kinds, especially in the field of battle.

2. The cities were plundered, ver. 1. All the goods of Sodom, and particularly their stores, and provisions of victuals, were carried off by the conquerors. Note, when men abuse the gifts of a bountiful providence to gluttony and excess, it is just with God; and his usual way, by some judgment or other, to strip them of that which they have so abused, *Hos. ii. 8, 9*.

3. Lot was carried captive, ver. 12: They took Lot among the rest, and his goods. Now Lot may here be considered.

(1.) As sharing with his neighbours in this common calamity. Though he was himself a righteous man, and (which here is expressed notice taken of) Abram's brother's son, yet he was involved with the rest in this trouble. Note, (1.) *All things come alike to all*, Eccl. ix. 2. The best of men cannot promise themselves to be exempted from the greatest troubles in this life, neither our own piety, nor our relation to those that are the favourites of Heaven will be our security, when God's judgments are abroad. (2.) Many an honest man fares the worse for his wicked neighbours; it is therefore our wisdom to separate ourselves, or at least to distinguish ourselves, from them, 2 *Cor. vi. 17*. and so deliver ourselves, *Rev. xviii. 4*.

(2.) As smarting for the foolish choice he made of a settlement here: this is plainly intimated here, when it is said, they took Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom. So near a relation of Abram should have been a companion and disciple of Abram, and should have abode by his tents, but if he chuse to dwell in Sodom, he must thank himself if he share in Sodom's calamities. Note, when we go out of the way of our duty, we put ourselves from under God's protection, and cannot expect that the choices which are made by our lusts should issue to our comfort. Particular mention is made of their taking Lot's goods, those goods which had occasioned his contest with Abram, and his separation from him. Note, it is just with God to deprive us of those enjoyments by which we have suffered ourselves to be deprived of our enjoyment of him.

13. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. 14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. 15. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. 16. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

We have here an account of the only military action we ever find Abram engaged in; and this he was not prompted to by his avarice or ambition, but purely by a principle of charity; it was not to enrich himself but to help his friend. Never was any military expedition undertaken, prosecuted, and finished; more honourably than this of Abram's. Here is,

1. The tidings brought him of his kinsman's distress. Providence so ordered it that he now sojourned not far off, that he might be a very present help. (1.) He is here called Abram the Hebrew, *i. e.* the son and follower of Heber, in whose family the possession of the true religion was kept up in that degenerate age. Abram herein carried himself like a Hebrew, not unworthy the name and character of a professor. (2.) The tidings were brought by one that had escaped with his life for a prey. Probably he was a Sodomite, and as bad as the worst of them, yet knowing Abram's relation to Lot, and concern for him, he implores his help, and hopes to speed for Lot's sake. Note, the worst of men in the day of their trouble, will be glad to claim acquaintance with those that are wise and good, and get an interest in them. The rich man in hell called Abram father: and the foolish virgins made court to the wife for a share of their oil.

2. The preparations he made for this expedition. The cause was plainly good, his call to engage in it was clear, and therefore with all speed he armed his trained servants, born in his house, to the number of three hundred and eighteen. A great family, but a small army, about as many as Gideon's that routed the Midianites, *Judg. vii. 7*. He drew out his trained servants, or his catechised servants, not only instructed in the art of war, which was then far short of the perfection which later and worse ages have improved it to, but instructed in the principles of religion, for Abram commanded his household to keep the way of the Lord. This shews that Abram was, 1. A great man, who had



so many servants depending upon him, and employed by him, which was not only his strength and honour, but gave him a great opportunity of doing good, which is all that is truly valuable and desirable in great places, and great estates. 2. A good man, who not only served God himself, but instructed all about him in the service of God. Note, those that have great families have not only many bodies, but many souls besides their own to take care of and provide for. Those that would be found the followers of Abram must see that their servants be catechised servants. 3. A wise man; for though he was a man of peace, yet he disciplined his servants for war, not knowing what occasion he might have some time or other so to employ them. Note, though our holy religion teaches us to be for peace, yet it doth not forbid us to provide for war.

3. His allies and confederates in this expedition. He prevailed with his neighbours, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, (with whom he kept up a very fair correspondence) to go along with him. It was his prudence thus to strengthen his own troops with their auxiliary forces; and probably they saw themselves concerned in interest to act, as they could, against this formidable power, lest their own turn should be next. Note, 1. It is our wisdom and duty to behave ourselves so respectfully and obligingly towards all men, as that whenever there is occasion they may be willing and ready to do us a kindness. 2. Those who depend on God's help, yet in times of distress ought to make use of men's help as providence offers it, else they tempt God.

4. His courage and conduct were very remarkable.

(1.) There was a great deal of bravery in the enterprise itself, considering the disadvantages he lay under. What could one family of husbandmen and shepherds do against the armies of four princes, who now came fresh from blood and victory? It was not a conquered but a conquering army that he was to pursue: nor was he constrained by necessity to this daring attempt, but moved to it by generosity, so that all things considered, it was for ought I know as great an instance of true courage as ever Alexander or Cæsar were celebrated for. Note, religion doth not tend to make men cowards, but truly valiant. The righteous is bold as a lion. The true Christian is the true hero.

(2.) There was a great deal of policy in the management of it. Abram was no stranger to the stratagems of war; he divided himself as Gideon did his little army, *Judg. vii. 16*, that he might come upon the enemy from several quarters at once, and so make his few seem a great many; he made his attack by night that he might surprize them. Note, honest policy is a good friend both to our safety, and to our usefulness. The serpent's head (provided it be nothing a-kin to the old serpent) may well become a good Christian's body, especially if it have a dove's eye in it, *Matth. x. 16*.

5. His success was very considerable, *ver. 15, 16*. He defeated his enemies, and rescued his friends, and we do not find that he sustained any loss. Note, (1.) Those that venture in a good cause, with a good heart are under the special protection of a good God, and have reason to hope for a good issue. (2.) *It is all one with the Lord to save by many or by few*, *1 Sam. xiv. 6*. Observe,

1. He rescued his kinsman; twice here he is called his brother Lot; the remembrance of the relation that was between them both, by nature and grace, made him forget the little quarrel that had been between them, in which Lot had by no means carried himself well towards Abram. Justly might Abram here upbraid Lot with his folly in quarrelling with him, and removing from him, and have told him that he was well enough served, he might have known when he was well, but in the charitable breast of pious Abram, it is all forgiven and forgotten, and he takes this opportunity to give a real proof of the sincerity of his reconciliation. Note, 1. We ought to be ready, whenever it is in the power of our hands, to succour and relieve those that are in distress, especially our relations and friends. *A brother is born for adversity*, *Prov. xvii. 17*. A friend in need is a friend indeed. 2. Though others have been wanting in their duty to us, yet we must not therefore deny our duty to them. Some have said they can easier forgive their enemies than forgive their friends; but we shall see ourselves obliged to forgive both, if we consider that our God not only when we were enemies reconciled us, but that also he *passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage*, *Mich. vii. 18*.

2. He rescued the rest of the captives for Lot's sake: though they were strangers to him, and such as he was under no obligation to at all, nay, though they were Sodomites, sinners before the Lord exceedingly, and though probably he might have recovered Lot alone by ransom, yet he brought back all the women and the people, and their goods, *ver. 16*. Note, as we have opportunity we must do good to all men. Our charity must be extensive, as opportunity offers itself. Wherever God gives life we must not grudge the help we can give to support it. God doth good to the just and unjust and so must we, *Matth. v. 45*. This victory which Abram obtained over the kings, the prophet seems to refer to, *Isa. xli. 2, 3. who raised up the righteous man from the east, and made him rule over kings*. And some suggest that as before he had a title to this land by grant, so now by conquest.

17. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings that were with him) at the valley of Shaveh, which is the kings dale. 18. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. 19. And he blessed him, and said, blessed be Abram of the most high God possessor of heaven and earth: 20. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

This paragraph begins with the mention of the respects which the king of Sodom paid to Abram, at his return from the slaughter of the kings, but before a particular account is given of that, the story of Melchizedek is briefly related. Concerning whom observe,

1. Who he was. He was king of Salem and priest of the most high God, and other glorious things are said of him, *Heb. vii. 1, &c.* (1.) The rabbins and most of our rabbinical writers conclude that Melchizedek was Shem the son of Noah, who was king and priest to those that descended from him according to the patriarchal model. But this is not at all probable, for why should his name be changed: and how came he to settle in Canaan? (2.) Many Christian writers have thought that this was an appearance of the son of God himself, our Lord Jesus, known to Abram at this time by this name, as afterwards Hagar called him by another name, *chap. xvi. 13*. He appeared to him as a righteous king owning a righteous cause and giving peace. It is hard to think that any meer man should be said to be *without father, without mother, and without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life*, *Heb. vii. 3*. It is witnessed of Melchizedek, that he liveth, and that he abideth a priest continually, *ver. 3, 8*. nay, *ver. 13, 14*, the apostle makes him of whom these things are spoken to be our Lord who sprang out of Judah. It is likewise hard to think that any meer man should at this time be greater than Abram in the things of God, and that Christ should be a priest after the order of any meer man, and that any human priesthood should so far excel that of Aaron as it is certain Melchizedek's did. (3.) The most received opinion is, that Melchizedek was a Canaanite prince, that reigned in Salem, and kept up the true religion there; but if so why he should occur here only in all the story of Abram, why Abram should have altars of his own and not attend the altars of his neighbour Melchizedek who was greater than he, seems unaccountable; Mr Gregory of Oxford tells us, that the Arabic Catena, which he builds much upon the authority of, gives this account of Melchizedek, That he was the son of Heraclim, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, and that his mother's name was Salathiel, the daughter of Gomer, the son of Japheth, the son of Noah.

2. What he did, (1.) He brought forth bread and wine for the refreshment of Abram and his soldiers, and in congratulation of their victory. This he did as a king, teaching us to do good and to communicate, and to be given to hospitality, according to our ability; and representing the spiritual provisions of strength and comfort which Christ has laid up for us in the covenant of grace, for our refreshment when we are toiled with our spiritual conflicts. (2.) As priest of the most high God he blessed Abram, which we may suppose a greater refreshment to Abram than his bread and wine were. Thus God having raised up his son Jesus has sent him to bless us, as one having authority, and those whom he blest they are blest indeed. Christ went to Heaven when he was blessing his disciples, *Luk. xxiv. 51*. for that is it he ever lives to do.

3. What he said, *ver. 19, 20*. Two things were said by him.

(1.) He blessed Abram from God, *ver. 19. Blessed be Abram, blessed of the most high God*. Observe the titles he here gives to God, which are very glorious. (1.) The most high God, which speaks his absolute perfections in himself, and his sovereign dominion over all the creatures, he is king of kings. Note, It will greatly help both our faith and our reverence in prayer to eye God as the most high God, and to call him so. (2.) Possessor of heaven and earth, *i. e.* rightful owner and sovereign Lord of all the creatures; because he made them. This speaks him a great God, and greatly to be praised, *Psal. xxiv. 1*. and them a happy people who have an interest in his favour and love.

(2.) He blessed God for Abram, *ver. 20, and blessed be the most high God*. Note, (1.) In all our prayers we must praise God, and join Hallelujahs with all our Hosannahs. These are the spiritual sacrifices we must offer up daily, and upon particular occasions. (2.) God as the most high God must have the glory of all our victories, *Exod. xvii. 15. 1 Sam. vii. 10, 12. Judg. v. 1, 2. 2 Chron. xx. 21*. In them he shews himself higher than our enemies, *Exod. xviii. 11*. and higher than we, for without him he could do nothing. (3.) We ought to give thanks for others mercies as for our own; triumphing with them that triumph. (4.) Jesus Christ our great High-Priest is the Mediator both of our prayers and praises, and not only offers up ours, but his own for us. See *Luke x. 17, 21*.



4. What was done to him. *Abram gave him tithes of all*, i. e. of the spoils, *Heb. vii. 4.* This may be looked upon, (1.) As a gratuity presented to Melchizedek, by way of return for his respects. Note, They that receive kindness should shew kindness. Gratitude is one of nature's laws. (2.) As an offering vowed and dedicated to the most high God, and therefore put into the hands of Melchizedek his priest. Note, 1. When we have received some signal mercy from God it is very fit we should express our thankfulness by some special act of pious charity. God must always have his dues out of our substance; especially when by any particular providence he has either preserved or increased it to us. 2. That the tenth of our increase is a very fit proportion to be set apart for the honour of God, and the service of his sanctuary. 3. That Jesus Christ, our great Melchizedek, is to have homage done him, and to be humbly acknowledge by every one of us as our king and priest, and not only the tithe of all, but all we have must be surrendered and given up to him.

21. And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. 22. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, 23. That I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: 24. Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

We have here an account of what passed between Abram and the king of Sodom, who succeeded him that fell in the battle, ver. 10. and thought himself obliged to do this honour to Abram in return for the good services he had done him.

Here is, 1. The king of Sodom's grateful offer to Abram, ver. 21. *Give me the soul, and take thou the substance*, so the Hebrew reads it. Here he fairly begs the persons, but as freely bestows the goods on Abram. Note, (1.) Where a right is dubious and divided, it is wisdom to compound the matter by mutual concessions rather than to contend. The king of Sodom had an original right both to the persons and to the goods, and it would bear a debate, whether Abram's acquired right by rescue would supersede his title and extinguish it; but to prevent all quarrels, the king of Sodom makes this fair proposal. (2.) Gratitude teaches us to recompense to the utmost of our power those that have undergone fatigues, run hazards, and been at expence for our service and benefit. *Who goes a warfare at his own charges?* 1 Cor. ix. 7. Soldiers purchase their pay dearer than any labourers, and are well-worthy of it because they expose their lives.

2. Abram's generous refusal of this offer. He not only resigned the persons to him, who being delivered out of the hand of their enemies ought to have served Abram, but he restored all the goods too. He would not take *from a thread to a shoe-latchet*, not the least thing that had ever belonged to the king of Sodom or any of his. Note, A lively faith enables a man to look upon the wealth of this world, with a holy contempt, 1 John v. 4. what are all the ornaments and delights of sense to one that has God and Heaven ever in his eye? He resolves even to a thread and a shoe-latchet; for a tender conscience fears offending in a small matter.

Now, 1. Abram ratifies this resolution with a solemn oath. *I have lift up my hand to the Lord, that I will not take any thing*, ver. 22. Here observe, (1.) The titles he gives to God, *The most high God, the possessor of Heaven and earth*, the same that Melchizedek had just now used, ver. 19. Note, It is good to learn of others how to order our speech concerning God, and to imitate those who speak well in divine things. This improvement we are to make of the conversation of devout good men, we must learn to speak after them. 2. The ceremony used in this oath. *I have lifted up my hand*. In religious swearing we appeal to God's knowledge of our truth and sincerity, and imprecate his wrath if we swear falsely, and the *lifting up of the hand* is very significant and expressive of both. 3. The matter of the oath was lawful, but what he was not antecedently obliged to, that he would not to take any reward from the king of Sodom, (1.) Probably Abram made this vow before he went to the battle, That if God would give him success he would for the glory of God and the credit of his profession so far deny himself, and his own right as to take nothing of the spoils to himself. Note, The vows we have made when we are in pursuit of a mercy must be carefully and conscientiously kept when we have obtained the mercy, though they were made against our interest. A citizen of Sion if he has sworn, whether it be to God or man, though it prove to *his own hurt*, yet he *changeth not*, Psal. xv. 4. Or, (2.) perhaps Abram now when he saw cause to refuse the offer made him, at the same time confirmed his refusal with this oath, to prevent further importunity. Note, 1. There may be good reason sometimes why we should debar ourselves of that which is our undoubted right, as St Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 13. chap. ix. 12. 2. That strong resolutions are of good use to put by the force of temptations.

2. He backs his refusal with a good reason, *lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich*, which would reflect reproach (1.) upon the promise and covenant of God, as if that would not have enriched Abram without the spoils of Sodom. And, (2.) upon the piety and charity of Abram, as if all he had in his eye when he undertook that hazardous expedition was to enrich himself. Note, 1. We must be very careful that we give not occasion to others to say things which they ought not. 2. The people of God must for their credit's sake take heed of doing any thing that looks mean or mercenary, or that favours of covetousness and self-seeking. Probably Abram knew the king of Sodom to be a proud and scornful man, and one that would be apt to turn such a thing as this to his reproach afterwards, though most unreasonably; and when we have to do with such men we have need to act with particular caution.

3. He limits his refusal with a double proviso, ver. 24. In making vows we ought carefully to insert the necessary exceptions, that we may not afterwards say before the angel, *It was an error*, Eccl. v. 6. Abram here excepts, 1. The food of his soldiers; they were worthy of their meat, while they trod out the corn. This would give no colour to the king of Sodom to say that he had enriched Abram. 2. The shares of his allies and confederates. *Let them take their portion*. Note, Those who are strict in restraining their own liberty, yet ought not to impose those restraints upon the liberties of others, nor to judge of them accordingly, we must not make ourselves the standard to measure others by. A good man will deny himself that liberty which he will not deny another, contrary to the practice of the Pharisees, *Matth. xxiii. 4.* There was not the same reason why Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, should quit their right that there was why Abram should. They did not make the profession that he made, nor were they as he was under the obligation of a vow: they had not the hopes that Abram had of a portion in the other world, and therefore by all means, *Let them take their portion* of this.

## C H A P. XV.

In this chapter we have a solemn treaty between God and Abram, concerning a covenant that was to be established between them. In the former chapter we had Abram in the field with kings; here in the mount with God; and though there he looked great, yet methinks here he looks much greater; that honour have the great men of the world, but this honour have all the saints. The covenant to be settled between God and Abram was a covenant of promises; accordingly here is, (1.) A general assurance of God's kindness and good-will to Abram, ver. 1. (2.) A particular declaration of the purposes of his love concerning him in two things. 1. That he would give him a numerous issue, ver. 2. to ver. 7. 2. That he would give him Canaan for an inheritance, ver. 7. to the end. *Either an estate without an heir, or an heir without an estate would have been a half-comfort to Abram. But God ensures both to him; and that which made these two, the promised-seed, and the promised-land, comforts indeed to this great believer was, That they were both typical of those two invaluable blessings, Christ and Heaven, and so we have reason to think Abram eyed them.*

1. After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

Observe here, 1. The time when God had this treaty with Abram. *After these things*, (1.) After that famous act of generous charity which Abram had done, in rescuing his friends and neighbours out of distress; and that *not for price nor reward*, after that God made him this gracious visit. Note, Those that shew favour to men shall find favour with God. (2.) After that victory which he had obtained over four kings: lest Abram should be too much elevated and pleased, with that God comes to him to tell him he had better things in store for him. Note, A believing converse with spiritual blessings is an excellent means to keep us from being too much taken up with temporal enjoyments. The gifts of common providence are not comparable with those of covenant love. 2. The manner how God conversed with Abram, *The word of the Lord came unto Abram*, i. e. God manifested himself and his will to Abram in a vision; which supposeth Abram awake, and some visible appearance of the Shechinah, or some sensible token of the presence of the divine glory. Note, The methods of divine revelation are adapted to our state in a world of sense. 3. The gracious assurance God gave him of his favour to him. 1. He called him by name Abram, which was a great honour to him, and made his name great, and was also a great encouragement and assistance to his faith. Note, God's good word then doth us good when it is spoken by his spirit to us in particular, and brought to our hearts. The word saith, *Ho every one*, (Isa. lv. 1.) the spirit saith, *Ho such a one*. 2. He cautioned him against amazing disquieting fears. *Fear not Abram*. Abram might fear lest the four kings he had routed should rally again, and fall upon him to his ruin, no, saith God, *Fear not*. Fear not their revenges, nor thy neighbours envy, I will take care of thee. Note, (1.) Where there is great faith yet there may be many fears,



fears, 2 Cor. vii. 5. (2.) God takes cognizance of his peoples fears though never to secret, and *knows their souls*, Psal. xxxi. 7. (3.) It is the will of God that his people should not give way to prevailing fears whatever happens. Let the sinners in Sion be afraid, but fear not Abram. 3. He assured him of safety and happiness, that he should for ever be. 1. As safe as God himself could keep him. *I am thy shield*; or, somewhat more emphatically, *I am a shield to thee*, present with thee, actually caring for thee. See 1 Chron. xvii. 24. *Not only the God of Israel, but a God to Israel*. Note, The consideration of this that God himself is and will be a shield to his people to secure them from all destructive evils, and a shield ready to them, and a shield round about them, should be sufficient to silence all their perplexing tormenting fears.

2. As happy as God himself could make him. I will be *thy exceeding reward*: not only thy rewarder, but thy reward. Abram had generously refused the rewards which the king of Sodom offered him, and here God comes and tells him he shall be no loser by it. Note, 1. The rewards of believing obedience and self-denial are exceeding great, 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2. God himself is the chosen and promised felicity of holy souls; chosen in this world, promised in a better. He is the *portion of their inheritance and their cup*.

2. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3. And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4. And behold the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

We have here the assurance given to Abram of a numerous offspring which should descend from him. In which, 1. Abram's repeated complaint, ver. 2, 3. This was that which gave occasion to this promise. The great affliction that fate heavy upon Abram was the want of a child, and the complaint of this he here *pours out before the Lord, and shows before him the trouble*, Psal. cxlii. 2. Note, Though we must never complain of God, yet we have leave to complain to him, and to be large and particular in the remonstrance of our grievances, and it is some ease to a burthened spirit to open it's case to a faithful and compassionate friend; such a friend God is, whose ear is always open. Now his complaint is four-fold.

1. That he had no child, ver. 3. *Behold, to me thou hast given no seed*; not only no son, but *no seed*; if he had had a daughter, from her the promised Messiah might have come, who was to be the seed of the woman, but he had neither son nor daughter. He seems to lay an emphasis on that, *to me*. His neighbours were full of children, his servants had children born in his house, but *to me* (faith he) thou hast given none, and yet God had told him he should be a favourite above any. Note, 1. Those that are written childless, must see God writing them so. 2. God often withholds those temporal comforts from his own children which he gives plentifully to others that are strangers to him.

2. That in all probability he was never likely to have any: intimated in that, *I go*, or, *I am going, childless*, going into years, going down the hill apace; nay, I am going out of the world, going the way of all the earth. *I die childless*. So the Seventy. I leave the world, and leave no child behind me.

3. That his servants were for the present, and were likely to be to him instead of sons. While he lived *the steward of his house was Eliezer of Damascus*, to him he committed the care of his family and estate, who might be faithful, but only as a servant, not as a son. When he died *one born in his house would be his heir*, and would bear rule over all that *for which he had laboured*, Eccl. ii. 18, 19, 21. God had already told him that he would make of him *a great nation*, chap. xii. 2. and his *seed as the dust of the earth*, chap. xiii. 16. But had left him in doubt whether it should be his seed begotten, or his seed adopted, by a son of his loins, or only a son of his house. Now Lord, faith Abram, if it be only an adopted son it must be one of my servants, which will reflect disgrace upon the promised seed, that is to descend from him. Note, While promised mercies are delayed, our unbelief and impatience is apt to conclude them denied.

4. That the want of a son was so great a trouble to him, that it took away the comforts of all his enjoyments. *Lord, what wilt thou give me?* All is nothing to me if I have not a son. Now, 1. If we suppose that Abram looked no further than a temporal comfort, this complaint was culpable. God had by his providence given him some good things, and more by his promise, and yet Abram makes no account of them because he has not a son. It did very ill become the father of the faithful to say, *What wilt*

*thou give, seeing I go childless*, immediately after God had said, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*. Note, Those do not rightly value the advantages of their covenant-relation to God, and interest in him, who do not think it sufficient to ballance the want of any creature-comfort whatsoever. But, 2. If we suppose that Abram herein had an eye to the promised seed, the importunity of his desire was very commendable, all was nothing to him, if he had not the earnest of that great blessing, and an assurance of his relation to the Messiah, which God had already raised in him some expectation of. He has wealth, and victory, and honour, but while he is kept in the dark about the main matter, it is all nothing to him. Note, 'Till we have some comfortable evidence of our interest in Christ and the new covenant, we should not rest satisfied with any thing else. This and the other I have, but what will all this avail me if I go Christless? Yet thus far the complaint was culpable that there was some diffidence of the promise at the bottom of it, and a weariness of waiting God's time. Note, True believers sometimes find it hard to reconcile God's promises and his providences when they seem to disagree.

2. God's gracious answer to this complaint. To the first part of the complaint, ver. 2. God gave no immediate answer, because there was something of fretfulness in it, but when he renewed his address somewhat more calmly, ver. 3. God answered him graciously. Note, If we continue instant in prayer, and yet pray with a humble submission to the divine will we shall not seek in vain.

1. God gave him an express promise of a son, ver. 4. This that is born in thy house *shall not be thine heir*, as thou fearest, but one that shall *come forth out of thine own bowels, shall be thine heir*. Note, 1. God makes heirs; he saith, This shall not, and this shall; whatever men devise and design, in settling of their estates, God's counsel shall stand. 2. God is often better to us than our own fears, and gives the mercy we had long despaired of.

2. To affect him the more with this promise, he took him out, and shewed him the stars, (this vision being early in the morning, before day) and then tells him, *So shall thy seed be*, ver. 5. (1.) So innumerable, for so the stars seem to a common eye; Abram feared he should have no child at all, but God tells him the descendants from his loins should be so many as not to be numbered. (2.) So illustrious as the stars of Heaven for splendor, for to *them pertained the glory* Rom. ix. 4. Abram's seed, according to the flesh, were like the *dust of the earth*, chap. xiii. 16. but his spiritual seed are like the stars of Heaven, not only numerous, but glorious, and very precious.

3. Abram's firm belief of the promise of God now made him, and God's favourable acceptance of his faith, ver. 6. 1. He *believed in the Lord*, that is, he believed the truth of that promise which God had now made him, resting upon the irresistible power, and the inviolable faithfulness of him that made it, *Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* Note, Those who would have the comfort of the promises, must mix faith with the promises. See how the apostle magnifies this faith of Abram, and makes it a standing example, Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. *He was not weak in faith; he staggered not at the promise; he was strong in faith; he was fully persuaded*. The Lord work such a faith in every one of us. Some think his believing in the Lord, looks not only at the Lord promising, but promised, the Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. He *believed in him*, that is, received and embraced the divine revelation concerning him, and *rejoiced to see his day*, tho' at so great a distance, Job. viii. 56.

2. *God counted it to him for righteousness*, i. e. upon the score of this he was accepted of God, and as the rest of the patriarchs by faith he *obtained witness that he was righteous*, Heb. xi. 4. This is urged in the New Testament to prove, that we are justified by faith without the works of the law, Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6. for Abram was so justified, while he was yet uncircumcised. If Abram that was so rich in good works was not justified by them but by his faith, much less can we that are so poor in them. This faith, which was imputed to Abram for righteousness had newly struggled with unbelief, ver. 2. and coming off a conqueror, it was thus crowned, thus honoured. Note, A fiducial practical acceptance of and dependance upon God's promise of grace and glory, in and through Christ, is that which, according to the tenor of the new covenant, gives us a right to all the blessings contained in that promise. All believers are justified as Abram was, and it was his faith that was counted to him for righteousness.

7. And he said unto him, I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. 8. And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it. 9. And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. 10. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. 11. And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.



We have here the assurance given to Abram of the land of Canaan for an inheritance.

1. God declares his purpose concerning it, *ver. 7.* Observe here, (1.) Abram made no complaint in this matter, as he had done for the want of a child. Note, Those that are sure of an interest in the promised seed, will see no reason to doubt of a title to the promised land. If Christ be ours, Heaven is ours. (2.) When he believed the former promise, *ver. 6.* then God explained and ratified this to him. Note, To him that hath and improves what he has, more shall be given. Three things God here minds Abram of, for his encouragement, concerning the promise of this good land. 1. What God is *in himself*: *I am the Lord* Jehovah; and therefore (1.) I may give it thee, for I am sovereign Lord of all, and have a right to dispose of the whole earth. (2.) I can give it thee, whatever opposition may be made, tho' by the sons of Anak. God never promises more than he is able to perform, as men often do. (3.) I will make good my promise to thee, *Jehovah is not a man that he should lie.* 2. What he had done for Abram; he had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of the fire of the Chaldees, by some, *i. e.* from their idolatries, for the Chaldeans worshipped the fire: or 2. From their persecutions. The Jewish writers have a tradition that Abram was cast into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship idols, and was miraculously delivered. It is rather a place of that name. Thence God brought him by an effectual call, brought him with a gracious violence; snatched him as a brand out of the burning. This was, (1.) a special mercy; I brought thee, and left others, thousands to perish there; *God called him alone*, *Isa. li. 2.* (2.) a spiritual mercy; a mercy to his soul, a deliverance from sin, and its fatal consequences. If God save our souls we shall want nothing that is good for us. (3.) A fresh mercy, lately bestowed, and therefore should be the more affecting; as that in the preface to the commandments, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Egypt lately. (4.) A foundation mercy, the beginning of mercy, peculiar mercy to Abram, and therefore a pledge and earnest of further mercy, *Isa. lxi. 9.* Observe how God speaks of it as that which he gloried in, *I am the Lord that brought thee out*: He glories in it as an act both of power and grace; compare *Isa. xxix. 22.* where he glories in it long after, *Thus saith the Lord who redeemed Abraham, redeemed him from sin.* 3. What he intended to do yet further for him, *I brought thee* hither on purpose to give thee this land to inherit it, not only to possess it, but to possess it as an inheritance, which is the sweetest and surest title. Note, (1.) The providence of God hath secret but gracious designs in all its various dispensations towards good people, we cannot conceive the projects of providence, till the event shews what it was driving at. (2.) The great thing God designs in all his dealings with his people is to bring them safe to Heaven. They are *chosen to salvation*, 2 *Thes. ii. 13.* called to the kingdom, 1 *Thes. ii. 12.* begotten to the inheritance, 1 *Pet. i. 3, 4.* and by all made meet for for it, *Col. i. 12, 13.* 2 *Cor. iv. 17.*

2. Abram desires a sign, *ver. 8,* *whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?* This did not proceed from distrust of God's power, or promise, as that of Zecharias, but he desired this, 1. For the strengthening and confirming of his own faith; he believed, *ver. 6.* but here he prays, *Lord help me* against my unbelief. Now he believed, but he desired a sign to be treasured up against an hour of temptation, not knowing how his faith might by some event or other be shocked and tried. Note, We all need and should desire helps from Heaven, for the confirming our faith, and improve sacraments, which are instituted signs for that purpose. See *Judg. vi. 36.* 2 *Kings xx. 8, 9, 10.* *Isa. vii. 11, 12.* 2. For the ratifying of the promise to his posterity, that they also might be brought to believe it. Note, Those that are satisfied themselves, should desire that others also might be satisfied of the truth of God's promises. John sent his disciples to Christ, not so much for his own satisfaction as for theirs, *Matth. xi. 2, 3.* Canaan was a type of Heaven. Note, It is a very desirable thing to know that we shall inherit the heavenly Canaan, that is, to be confirmed in our belief of the truth of that happiness, and to have the evidences of our title to it more and more cleared up to us.

3. God directs Abram to make preparations for a sacrifice, intending by that to give him a sign, and Abraham makes preparation accordingly, *ver. 9, 10, 11.* *Take me an heifer, &c.* Perhaps Abram expected some extraordinary sign from Heaven, but God gives him a sign upon a sacrifice. Note, Those that would receive the assurances of God's favour, and would have their faith confirmed, must attend instituted ordinances, and expect to meet with God in them. Observe, 1. God appointed that each of the beasts used for this service should be three years old, because then they were at their full growth and strength: God must be served with the best we have, for he is the best. 2. We do not read that God gave Abram particular directions how to manage these beasts and fowl, knowing that he was so well versed in the law and custom of sacrifices, that he needed not any particular directions; or, perhaps, instructions were given him, which he carefully observed, tho' they be not recorded: at least it was intimated to him, that they must be prepared for the solemnity of ratifying a covenant, which he well enough knew the manner of. 3. Abram took as God appointed him, tho' as yet he knew not how these things should become a sign to him. This

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was not the first instance of Abram's implicit obedience. He divided the beasts in the midst, according to the ceremony used in confirming covenants, *Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19.* where it is said they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts. 4. Abram having prepared according to God's appointment, now set himself to expect what sign God would give him by these, like the prophet upon his watch tower, *Hab. ii. 1.* While God's appearing to own his sacrifice was deferred, Abram continued waiting, and his expectations were raised by those delays; when the fowls came down upon the carcases to prey upon them, as common and neglected things, *Abram drove them away*, *ver. 11.* believing that the vision would at the end speak and not lie. Note, A very watchful eye must be kept upon our spiritual sacrifices, that nothing be suffered to prey upon them, and render them unfit for God's acceptance. When vain thoughts, like these fowls, come down upon our sacrifices, we must drive them away, and not suffer them to lodge within us but attend on God without distraction.

12. And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years. 14. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

We have here a full and particular discovery made to Abram of God's purposes concerning his seed. Observe,

(1.) The time when God came to him with this discovery, *when the sun was going down*, or declining; about the time of the evening oblation, 1 *Kings xviii. 36.* *Dan. ix. 21.* early in the morning before day, while the stars were yet to be seen, God had given him orders concerning the sacrifices, *ver. 5.* and we may suppose it was at least his morning's work to prepare them, and set them in order, which when he had done, he abode by them praying and waiting till towards evening. Note, God often keeps his people long in expectation of the comforts he designs them, for the confirmation of their faith: but tho' the answers of prayer, and the performance of promises come slowly, yet they come surely, at evening time it shall be light.

(2.) The preparatives for this discovery, (1.) A deep sleep fell upon Abram, not a common sleep through weariness or carelessness, but a divine extasy, like that which the Lord God caused to fall upon Adam, *Gen. ii. 21.* That being hereby wholly taken off from the view of things sensible, he might be wholly taken up with the contemplation of things spiritual. The doors of the body were locked up that the soul might be private and retired, and might act the more freely, and like itself. (2.) With this sleep a horror of great darkness fell upon him: a sudden change! But just before we had him solacing himself in the comforts of God's covenant, and in communion with him: and here a horror of great darkness falls upon him. Note, The children of light do not always walk in the light, but sometimes clouds and darkness are round about them. This great darkness which brought horror with it, was designed,

(1.) To strike an awe upon the spirit of Abram, and to possess him with a holy reverence; that the familiarity which God was pleased to admit him to, might not breed contempt. Note, Holy fear prepares the soul for holy joy; the spirit of bondage makes way for the spirit of adoption. God wounds first, and then heals, humbles first, and then lifts up, *Isa. vi. 5, 6.*

(2.) To be a specimen of the methods of God's dealings with his seed; they must first be in the horror and darkness of Egyptian slavery, and then enter with joy into the good land; and therefore he must first have the foretaste of their sufferings, before he had the fore-sight of their happiness.

(3.) To be an indication of the nature of that covenant of peculiarity which God was now about to make with Abram. The Old Testament dispensation which was founded on that covenant, was a dispensation, (1.) of darkness and obscurity, 2 *Cor. iii. 13.* (2.) of dread and horror, *Heb. xii. 18, &c.* 3. The prediction itself: several things are here foretold.

1. The suffering state of Abraham's seed for a long time, *ver. 13.* Let not Abram flatter himself with the hopes of nothing but honour and prosperity in his family: no, he must know of a surety that which he was loth to believe, that the promised seed should be a persecuted seed. Note, 1. God sends the worst first; we must first suffer, and then reign. 2. He lets us know the worst before it come, that when it comes, it may not be a surprise to us, *John xvi. 4.* Now we have here (1.) the particulars of their sufferings. 1. They shall be strangers; so they were in Canaan first, *Psal. cv. 12.* and afterwards in Egypt: before they were lords of their own land, they were strangers in a strange land. The inconveniences of an unsettled state, make a happy settlement



element the more welcome. Thus the heirs of Heaven are first strangers on earth, a land that is not theirs. 2. They shall be servants; so they were to the Egyptians, *Exod. i. 13.* See how, that was which the doom of the Canaanites, *Gen. ix. 25,* proves the distress of Abram's seed, they are made to serve, but with this difference, the Canaanites serve under a curse, the Hebrews under a blessing; and the *upright shall have dominion in the morning,* *Psal. xlix. 14.* 3. They shall be sufferers. Those whom they serve shall afflict them, see *Exod. i. 11.* Note, Those that are blessed and beloved of God, are often times sorely afflicted by wicked men; and God foresees it, and takes cognizance of it. (2.) The continuance of their sufferings 400 years. This persecution began with mocking, when Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian, persecuted Isaac, who was *born after the spirit,* (*Gen. xxi. 9. Gal. iv. 29.*) It continued in loathing, for it was an abomination to the Egyptians to eat bread with the Hebrews, *Gen. xliii. 32.* and it came at last to murder, the basest of murders, that of their new born children; so that more or less it continued 400 years, though in extremity not so many: This was a long time, but a limited time.

2. The Judgment of the enemies of Abram's seed, ver. 14. *That nation whom they shall serve, even the Egyptians, will I judge.* This points at the plagues of Egypt, by which God not only constrained the Egyptians to release Israel, but punished them for all the hardships they had put upon them. Note, 1. Tho' God may suffer persecutors and oppressors to trample upon his people a great while, yet he will certainly reckon with them at last, for his *day is coming,* *Psal. xxxvii. 12, 13.* 2. The punishing of persecutors is the judging of them; it is a righteous thing with God, and a particular act of justice, to *recompense tribulation to those that trouble his people.* The judging of the church's enemies is God's work. I will judge: God can do it, for he is the Lord; he will do it, for he is his people's God, and he hath said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay.* To him therefore we must leave it to be done in his way and time.

3. The deliverance of Abraham's seed out of Egypt: that great event is here foretold, *afterward shall they come out with great substance.* It is here promised, (1.) That they should be enlarged, *afterward they shall come out, i. e.* either after they have been afflicted 400 years, when the days of their servitude are fulfilled, then they may expect deliverance; or after the Egyptians are judged and plagued. Note, The destruction of oppressors, is the redemption of the oppressed; they will not let God's people go till they are forced to it. (2.) That they should be enriched; they shall come out with great substance: this was fulfilled, *Exod. xii. 35, 36.* God took care they should not only have a good land to go to, but a good stock to bring with them.

4. Their happy settlement in Canaan, ver. 16. They shall not only come out of Egypt, but they shall come hither again, hither to the land of Canaan, wherein thou now art. The discontinuance of their possession shall be no defeasance of their right; we must not reckon those comforts lost for ever that are intermitted for a time. The reason why they must not have the land of promise in possession till the fourth generation, is because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. Israel cannot be possessed of Canaan, till the Amorites be dispossessed, and they are not yet ripe for ruin. The righteous God has determined, that they shall not be cut off till they have persisted in sin so long, and are arrived to such a pitch of wickedness, that there may appear some equitable proportion between their sin and their ruin: and therefore till it come to that, the seed of Abram must be kept out of possession. Note, 1. The measure of sin fills gradually: those that continue impenitent in wicked ways, are treasuring up unto themselves wrath. 2. Some peoples measure of sin fills slowly. The Sodomites that were sinners before the Lord exceedingly, soon filled their measure, so did the Jews that were in profession near to God, but the iniquity of the Amorites was long in the filling up. 3. That this is the reason of the prosperity of wicked people. The measure of their sins is not yet full. The wicked live, become old, and are mighty in power, while God is laying up their iniquity for their children, *Job xxi. 7, 19.* See *Matth. xxiii. 32. Deut. xxxii. 34.*

5. Abram's peaceful quiet death and burial before these things should come to pass, ver. 15. As he should not live to see that good land in the possession of his family, but must die as he lived a stranger in it, so to ballance that he should not live to see the troubles that should come upon his seed, much less to share in them. This is promised to Josiah, *2 Kings xxii. 20.* Note, Good men are sometimes greatly favoured by being *taken away from the evil to come,* *Isa. lviii. 1.* Let this satisfy Abram that for his part, 1. He shall go to his fathers in peace. Note, (1.) Even the friends and favourites of Heaven are not exempted from the stroke of death; *Are we greater than our father Abram, which is dead,* *John viii. 53.* (2.) Good men die willingly, they are not tormented, they are not forced, but they go; their soul is not required as his, *Luke xii. 20.* but cheerfully resigned: they would not live always. (3.) At death we go to our fathers, to all our fathers that are gone before us to the state of the dead, *Job xxi. 33.* To our godly fathers that are gone before us to the state of the blessed, *Heb. xii. 23.* The former helps to take off the terror of death, the latter puts comfort into it. (4.) Whenever a godly

man dies, he dies in peace. If the way be piety, the end is peace, *Psal. xxxvii. 37.* Outward peace to the last, is promised to Abram, peace and truth in his days whatever should come after, *2 Kings xx. 19.* peace with God, and everlasting peace, are sure to all the feed.

2. He shall be buried in a good old age. Perhaps mention is made of his burial here, where the land of Canaan is promised him, because a burying-place was the first possession he had in it. He shall not only die in peace, but die in honour, die and be buried decently; not only *die in peace,* but *die in season,* *Job v. 25, 26.* Note, 1. Old age is a blessing, it is promised in the fifth commandment, it is pleasing to nature, and a great opportunity of usefulness; 2. Especially, if it be a good old age: theirs may be called a good old age, (1.) that are old and healthful, not loaded with such distempers as make them weary of life; 2. That are old and holy, old disciples, *Acts xxi. 16.* whose hoary head is *found in the way of righteousness,* *Prov. xvi. 31.* old and useful, old and exemplary for godliness, that is indeed a good old age.

17. And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. 18. In that same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. 19. The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, 20. And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims. 21. And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

Here is, 1. The covenant ratified, ver. 17. the sign which Abram desired was given at length, when the sun was gone down, so that it was dark; for that was a dark dispensation.

1. The smoking furnace signified the affliction of his seed in Egypt: they were there in the *iron furnace,* *Deut. iv. 20.* the *furnace of affliction,* *Isa. xlviii. 10.* labouring in the very fire. They were there in the smoke, their eyes darkened, that they could not see to the end of their troubles, and they at a loss what God would do with them; clouds and darkness were round about them, which made them weep as smoke doth.

2. The burning lamp speaks comfort, in this affliction, and this God shewed Abram at the same time that he shewed him the smoking furnace. (1.) Light notes deliverance out of the furnace: their salvation was as a lamp that burneth, *Isa. lxii. 1.* When God came down to deliver them he appeared in a bush that burned, and was not consumed, *Exod. iii. 2.* (2.) The lamp notes direction in the smoke; God's word was their lamp, this word to Abram was so, it was a light shining in a dark place; perhaps this burning lamp prefigured the pillar of cloud and fire which led them out of Egypt; in which God was. (3.) The burning lamp notes the destruction of their enemies that kept them so long in the furnace: see *Zech. xii. 6.* The same cloud that enlightened the Israelites, troubled and burned the Egyptians.

3. The passing of these between the pieces, was the confirming of the covenant God now made with him, that he might have strong consolation, being fully persuaded that what God promised he would certainly perform. It is probable, this furnace and lamp, which passed between the pieces, burned and consumed them, and so compleated the sacrifice, and testified God's acceptance of it, as of Gideon's, *Judg. vi. 21.* Manoah's, *Judg. xiii. 19, 20.* and Solomon's, *2 Chr. vii. 1.* so it intimates, 1. That God's covenants with man are made by sacrifice, *Psal. l. 5.* by Christ, the great sacrifice: no agreement without atonement. 2. God's acceptance of our spiritual sacrifices is a token for good, and an earnest of further favours: see *Judg. xiii. 23.* And by this we may know that he accepts our sacrifices, if he kindle in our souls a holy fire of pious and devout affections in them.

2. The covenant repeated and explained, ver. 18. *In that same day,* that day never to be forgotten, *the Lord made a covenant with Abram,* i. e. gave a promise to Abram, saying, *unto thy seed have I given this land.* Here is, 1. A rehearsal of the grant: he had said before, *To thy seed will I give this land,* chap. xii. 7,—13, 15. But here he saith, *I have given it;* that is,

(1.) I have given the promise of it, the charter is sealed and delivered, and cannot be disannulled. Note, God's promises are God's gifts, and are so to be accounted of.

(2.) The possession is as sure in due time, as if it were now actually delivered to them: what God hath promised, is as sure as if it were already done: hence, it is said, *He that believes hath everlasting life,* *John iii. 36.* for he shall as surely go to Heaven as if he were there already. 2. A recital of the particulars granted, such as is usual in the grants of lands. He specifies the boundaries of the land intended hereby to be granted, ver. 18. And then for the greater certainty, as is usual in this case, he mentions in whose tenures and occupation these lands now were. Ten several nations, or tribes, are here spoken of, ver. 19, 20, 21. that must be cast out to make room for the seed of Abram. They were not possessed of all these countries, when God brought them into Canaan. The bounds are fixed much narrower, *Num. xxxiv. 2, 3, &c.* But, 1. In David's time and Solomon's, their jurisdiction



dition extended to the utmost of these limits, 2 Chron. ix. 26. 2. It was their own fault, that they were not sooner and longer in possession of all these territories. They forfeited their right by their sins, and by their own sloth and cowardice kept themselves out of possession. 3. The land granted is here described in its utmost extent, because it was to be a type of the heavenly inheritance, where there is room enough; *In our father's house there are many mansions.* The present occupants are named, because their number and strength, and long prescription should be no hindrance to the accomplishment of this promise in its season. And to magnify God's love to Abram and his seed, in giving to that one nation the possession of many nations; so precious were they in his sight, and so honourable, Isa. xliii. 4.

## C H A P. XVI.

*Hagar is the person mostly concerned in the story of this chapter, an obscure Egyptian woman, whose name and story we had never heard of, if providence had not brought her into the family of Abram. Probably she was one of those maid-servants, which the king of Egypt (among other gifts) bestowed upon Abram, chap. xii. 16. Concerning her we have four things in this chapter: 1. Her marriage to Abram her master, ver. 1,—3. 2. Her misbehaviour towards Sarai her mistress, ver. 4,—6. 3. Her discourse with an angel that met her in her flight, ver. 7,—14. 4. Her delivery of a son, ver. 15, 16.*

1. **N**OW Sarai, Abrams wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her: and Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3. And Sarai Abrams wife took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

We have here the marriage of Abram to Hagar; who was his secondary wife; herein, tho' he may be excused, he cannot be justified, for *from the beginning it was not so*: and when it was so, it seems to have proceeded from an irregular desire to build up their families for the speedier peopling of the world, and the church: but now we must not be so. Christ has reduced this matter to the first institution, and makes the marriage union to be between one man and one woman only.

Now, 1. The maker of this match (would one think it?) was Sarai herself: she said to Abram, *I pray thee go in unto my maid*, ver. 2. Note, (1.) It is the policy of satan to tempt us by our nearest and dearest relations, or those friends that we have an opinion of, and an affection for. The temptation is most dangerous, when it is sent by a hand that is least suspected: it is our wisdom therefore to consider, not so much who speaks, as what is spoken. (2.) God commands, consult our own comfort and honour, much better than our own contrivances do. It had been much more for satan's interest, that Abram should have kept to the rule of God's law, than that he should be guided by her foolish projects; but we oft do ill for ourselves.

2. The inducement to it was Sarai's barrenness.

1. *Sarai bare Abram no children*; she was *very fair*, chap. xii. 14. and a very agreeable dutiful wife, a sharer with him in his large possessions, and yet written childless. Note, 1. God dispenseth his gifts variously, loading us with benefits, but not over loading us: some cross or other is appointed to be an allay to great enjoyments. 2. The mercy of children is oft given to the poor, and denied to the rich; given to the wicked, and denied to good people, tho' the rich have most to leave them, and good people would take most care of their education: God doth herein as it has pleased him.

2. She owned God's providence in this affliction, *the Lord hath restrained me from bearing*. Note, (1.) As where children are, it is God that gives them, Gen. xxxiii. 5. so where they are wanted, it is he that withholds them, Gen. xxx. 2. This evil is of the Lord. (2.) It becomes us to acknowledge this, that we may bear it, and improve it as an affliction of his ordering, for wife and holy ends.

3. She used this as an argument with Abram to marry his maid, and he was prevailed with by this argument to do it. Note, 1. When our hearts are too much set upon any creature-comfort, we are easily put upon the use of indirect methods for the obtaining of it: inordinate desires commonly produce irregular endeavours: if our wishes be not kept in a submission to God's providence, our pursuits will scarce be kept under the restraints of his precepts. 2. It is for want of a firm dependance upon God's promise, and a patient waiting God's time, that we go out of the way of our duty to catch at expected mercy; *He that believes doth not make haste*.

4. Abram's compliance with Sarai's proposal, we have reason to think was from an earnest desire of the promised seed, on whom the covenant should be entailed: God had told him, that

his heir should be a son of his body, but had not yet told him it should be a son by Sarai, therefore he thought, why not by Hagar: since Sarai herself proposed it? Note, 1. Foul temptations may have very fair pretences, and be coloured with that which is mighty plausible. 2. Fleishly wisdom as it anticipates God's time of mercy, so it puts us out of God's way. 3. This would be happily prevented, if we would ask counsel of God, by the word and prayer before we attempt that which is important and suspicious: herein Abram was wanting: he married without God's consent. *This persuasion came not of him that called him*.

4. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. 5. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. 6. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

We have here the immediate ill consequences of Abram's unhappy marriage to Hagar: a deal of mischief it made presently; when we do not well, both sin and trouble lie at the door; and we may thank ourselves for the guilt and grief that follows us when we go out of the way of our duty. See it in this story.

1. *Sarai is despised*, and thereby provoked and put into a passion, ver. 4. Hagar no sooner perceives herself with child by her master, but she looks scornfully upon her mistress, upbraids her perhaps with her barrenness, and insults over her to make her to fret, (as 1 Sam. i. 6.) boasts of the prospect she had of bringing an heir to Abram, to that good land, and to the promise, now she thinks herself a better woman than Sarai, more favoured by Heaven, and likely to be better beloved by Abram, and therefore she will not take it as she has done. Note, 1. Mean and servile spirits, when favoured and advanced either by God or man, are apt to grow haughty and insolent, and to forget their place and original. See Prov. xxix. 21.—xxx. 21, 22, 23. It is a hard thing to bear honour aright. 2. We justly suffer by those whom we have sinfully indulged; and it is a righteous thing with God to make those instruments of our trouble, whom we have made instruments of our sin, and to ensnare us in our own evil counsels; *he that rolleth this stone, it will return upon him*.

2. Abram is clamoured upon, and cannot be easy while Sarai is out of humour; she falls foul upon him indecently, and very unjustly charges him with the injury, ver. 5. *My wrong be upon thee*, with a most unreasonable jealousy, suspecting that he countenanced Hagar's insolence, and as one not willing to hear what Abram had to say for the rectifying of the mistake, and the clearing of himself, she rashly appeals to God in the case, *The Lord judge between me and thee*, as if Abram had refused to right her. Thus doth Sarai in her passion speak, *as one of the foolish women speaketh*. Note, 1. It is an absurdity which passionate people are often guilty of, to quarrel with others, for that which they themselves must bear the blame of: Sarai could not but own that she had given her maid to Abram, and yet she cries out, *My wrong be upon thee*, when she should have said, *What a fool was I to do so*; that is never said wisely, which pride and anger have the inditing of; when passion is upon the throne, reason is out of doors, and is neither heard nor spoken. 2. Those are not always in the right that are most loud and forward in appealing to God; rash and bold imprecations are commonly evidences of guilt and a bad cause.

3. Hagar is afflicted, and driven the house, ver. 6. Observe,

1. Abram's meekness resigns the matter of the maid-servant to Sarai, whose proper province it was to rule that part of the family, *thy maid is in thy hand*: tho' she was his wife he would not countenance, or protect her in any thing that was disrespectful to Sarai; for whom he still retained the same affection that ever he had. Note, Those who would keep up peace and love must return soft answers to hard accusations; husbands and wives particularly should agree, and endeavour not to be both angry together, *yielding pacifies great offences*; see Prov. xv. 1.

2. Sarai's passion will be revenged upon Hagar; *she dealt hardly with her*, not only confining her to her usual place and work, as a servant, but probably making her to serve with rigour. Note, God takes notice of, and is displeased with, the hardships, which harsh masters unreasonably put upon their servants: they ought to forbear threatening, with Job's thought, *Did not he that made me make him?* Job xxxi. 15.

3. Hagar's pride cannot bear it, her high spirit is become impatient of rebuke; *she fled from her face*; she not only avoided her wrath for the present, as David did Saul's, but she totally deserted her service, and over-run the house, forgetting, 1. What wrong she hereby did to her mistress, whose servant she was, and to her master, whose wife she was. Note, Pride will hardly be restrained by any bonds of duty, no, not by many. 2. That she herself had first given the provocation by despising her mistress. Note, Those



Those that suffer for their faults ought to *bear it patiently*, 1 Pet. ii. 20.

7. And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. 8. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. 9. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.

Here is the first mention we have in scripture of an angel's appearance: Hagar was a type of the law, which was *given by the disposition of angels, but the world to come is not put in subjection to them*, Heb. ii. 5. Observe,

1. Here the angel arrested her in her flight, *ver. 7.* It should seem she was making towards her own country, for she was in the way to Shur, which lay towards Egypt. It were well, if our afflictions would make us think of our home the better country. But Hagar was now out of her place, and out of the way of her duty, and going further astray, when the angel found her. Note, 1. It is a great mercy to be stopped in a sinful way, either by conscience or providence. 2. God suffers those that are out of the way to wander a while, that when they see their folly, and what a loss they have brought themselves to, they may be the better disposed to return: Hagar was not stopped till she was in the wilderness, and set down weary enough, and glad of fair water to refresh herself with, God brings us into a wilderness, and there meets us, *Hos. ii. 14.*

2. How he examined her, *ver. 8.* He called her *Hagar, Sarai's maid*, (1.) As a check to her pride: though she was Abram's wife, and as such was obliged to return, yet he calls her *Sarai's maid*, to humble her. Note, Though civility teach us to call others by their highest titles, yet humility and wisdom teach us to call ourselves by the lowest. (2.) As a rebuke to her flight. Sarai's maid ought to be in Sarai's tent, and not wandering in the wilderness, and santering by a fountain of water. Note, It is good for us often to call to mind what our place and relation is. See *Eccles. x. 4.*

Now, 1. The questions the angel put to her were proper and very pertinent, (1.) *Whence comest thou?* Consider that thou art running away, both from the duty thou wast bound to, and the privileges thou wast blessed with in Abram's tent. Note, It is a great advantage to live in a religious family, which those ought to consider who have that advantage, and upon every slight inducement are forward to quit it. (2.) *Whither wilt thou go?* Thou art running thyself into sin in Egypt, if she return to that people she will return to their gods: and into danger in the wilderness, through which she must travel, *Deut. viii. 15.* Note, Those who are forsaking God and their duty, would do well to remember not only *whence they are fallen*, but *whither they are falling*. See *Jer. ii. 18.* *What hast thou to do* (with Hagar) *in the way of Egypt?* *John vi. 68.*

2. Her answer was honest, and a fair confession, *I flee from the face of my mistress*. In which, 1. She acknowledges her fault in fleeing from her mistress, and yet, 2. excuses it, that it was *from the face*, or displeasure, of her mistress. Note, Children and servants must be treated with mildness and gentleness, lest we provoke them to take any irregular courses, and so become accessory to their sin, which will condemn us, though it will not justify them.

3. How he sent her back, with suitable and compassionate counsel, *ver. 9.* *Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hand.* Go home and humble thyself for what thou hast done amiss, and beg pardon, and resolve for the future to behave thyself better. He makes no question but she would be welcome, though it doth not appear that Abram sent after her. Note, Those that are gone away from their place and duty, when they are convinced of their error, must hasten their return and reformation, how mortifying soever it may be.

10. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. 11. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. 12. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. 13. And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seekest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? 14. Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

We may suppose that the angel having given Hagar that good counsel, *ver. 9.* to *return to her mistress*, she immediately promised to do so, and was setting her face homewards; and then the angel

went on to encourage her with an assurance of the mercy God had in store for her, and her seed. For God will meet those with mercy that are returning to their duty, *I said I will confess, and thou forgavest*, *Psal. xxxii. 5.*

Here is, 1. A prediction concerning her posterity, given her for her comfort in her present distress. Notice is taken of her condition; *Behold, thou art with child*: and therefore this is not a fit place for thee to be in. Note, It is a great comfort to women with child to think that they are under the particular cognizance and care of the divine providence. God graciously considers that case, and suits supports to it.

Now, (1.) The angel assures her of a safe delivery, and that of a son, which Abram desired. This fright and ramble of her's might have made her miscarry, but God dealt not with her according to her folly; *Thou shalt bear a son*, she was saved in child-bearing, not only by providence but promise.

(2.) He names her child, which was an honour both to her and it, call him Ishmael: God will hear, and the reason is because the Lord hath heard: he hath, and therefore he will. Note, The experience we have had of God's seasonable kindness to us in distress, should encourage us to hope for the like help in the like exigences, *Psal. x. 17.* He hath *heard of thy affliction*. Note, 1. Even there where there is little cry of devotion, the God of pity sometimes graciously hears the cry of affliction: tears speak as well as prayers. This speaks comfort to the afflicted, that God not only sees what their afflictions are, but hears what they say. 2. That seasonable succours in a day of affliction, ought always to be remembered with thankfulness to God. Such a time, in such a strait, *The Lord heard the voice of my affliction, and helped me*, *Psal. xxxii. 22.*

(3.) He promises her a numerous off-spring, *ver. 10.* *I will multiply thy seed exceedingly*, *Hebr. Multiplying I will multiply it.* i. e. multiply it in every age, so as to perpetuate it. It is supposed that the Turks at this day descend from Ishmael, and they are a great people. This was in pursuance of the promise made to Abram, chap. xiii. 16. *I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth*. Note, Many that are children of godly parents, have, for their sakes, a very large share of outward common blessings, though, like Ishmael, they are not taken into covenant: many are multiplied that are not sanctified.

(4.) He gives a character of the child she should bear, which however it may seem to us, perhaps was not very disagreeable to her, *ver. 12.* *He will be a wild man*: a wild ass of a man so the word is: rude and bold, and fearing no man; untamed, untractable, living at large, and impatient of service and restraint. Note, The children of the bond-woman who are out of covenant with God, are, as they were born, like the wild ass's colt: it is grace that reclaims men, civilizeth them, and makes them wise, and good for something. It is foretold, (1.) That he should live in strife, and in a state of war, *His hand against every man*, that is, his sin, and *every man's hand against him*, that is, his punishment. Note, Those that have turbulent spirits have commonly troublesome lives: they that are provoking, vexatious, and injurious to others, must expect to be repaid in their own coin. He that has his hand and tongue against every man, shall have every man's hand and tongue against him, and has no reason to complain of it. And yet, (2.) That he should live in safety, and hold his own against all the world, *He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren*; though threatened and insulted by all his neighbours, yet he shall keep his ground, and, for Abram's sake, more than his own, shall be able to make his part good with them: accordingly we read, *Gen. xxv. 18.* that he *died as he lived in the presence of all his brethren*. Note, Many that are much exposed by their own imprudence, yet are strangely preserved by the divine providence; so much better is God to them, than they deserve, who not only forfeit their lives by sin, but hazard them.

2. Hagar's pious reflection upon this gracious appearance of God to her, *ver. 13, 14.* Observe in what she said,

1. Her awful adoration of God's omniscience and providence, with application of it to herself; *she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her*, i. e. thus she made confession of his name, this she said to his praise, *Thou God seekest me*: this should be, with her, his name for ever, and this his memorial, by which she will know him, and remember him while she lives, *Thou God seekest me*. Note, 1. The God with whom we have to do, is a seeing God, an all-seeing God. *God is* (as the ancients expressed it) *all eye*. 2. We ought to acknowledge this with application to ourselves. He that sees all sees me, as David, *Psal. cxxxix. 1.* *O God thou hast searched me, and known me*. 3. A believing regard to God as a God that sees us, will be of great use to us in our returns to him. It is a proper word for a penitent: 1. *Thou seekest my sin and folly*: I have *sinned before thee*, saith the prodigal, *in thy sight*, saith David. 2. *Thou seekest my sorrow and affliction*. This Hagar especially refers to, when we have brought ourselves into distress by our own folly, yet God has not forsaken us. 3. *Thou seekest the sincerity and seriousness of my return and repentance*. Thou seekest my secret mournings for sin, and secret motions towards thee. 4. *Thou seekest me*, if in any instance I depart from thee, *Psal. xlv. 20, 21.* This thought should always restrain us from sin, and excite us to duty, *Thou God seekest me*.

2. Her



2. Her humble admiration of God's favour to her: *Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?* Have I here *seen the back-parts* of him that seeth me? So it might be read, for the word is much the same with that, *Exod. xxxiii. 23.* she saw not *face to face*, but as *through a glass darkly*, *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* Probably she knew not who it was that talked with her, till he was departing, as *Judg. vi. 22.—xiii. 21.* and then she looked after him, with a reflection like that of the two disciples, *Luke xxiv. 31, 32.* Or, *Have I seen him that sees me?* Note, 1. That the communion which holy souls have with God, consists in their having an eye of faith towards him, as a God that has an eye of favour towards them. The intercourse is kept up by the eye. 2. That the privilege of our communion with God, is to be looked upon with wonder and admiration, considering what we are who are admitted to this favour. Have I? I that am so mean, I that am so vile? *2 Sam. vii. 18.* considering the place where we are thus favoured; here also? not only in Abram's tent, and at his altar, but here also, in this wilderness? Here, where I never expected it, where I was out of the way of my duty? *Lord, how is it?* *John xiv. 22.* Some make the answer to this question to be negative, and so look upon it as a penitent reflection: *Have I here also* in my distress and affliction *looked after God?* No, I was as careless and unmindful of him as ever I used to be, and yet he has thus visited and regarded me: for God often prevents us with his favours, and is found of those that seek him not, *Isa. lxv. 1.*

3. The name which this gave to the place, ver. 14. *Beer lahai-roi*, *The well of him that lives and sees me*: It is likely Hagar put this name upon it. and it was retained long after, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*. This was the place where the God of glory manifested the special cognizance and care he took of a poor woman in distress. Note, 1. He that is all-seeing is ever-living; he lives and sees us. 2. Those that are graciously admitted into communion with God, and receives seasonable comforts from him should tell others what he has done for their souls, that they also may be encouraged to seek him, and trust in him. 3. God's gracious manifestations of himself to us are to be had in everlasting remembrance by us, and should never be forgotten.

15. And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his sons name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. 16. And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

It is here taken for granted, though not expressly recorded, that Hagar did as the angel commanded her; returned to her mistress, and submitted herself, and then in the fulness of time she brought forth her son. Note, Those who obey divine precepts shall have the comfort of divine promises. This was the son of the bond-woman that was *born after the flesh*, *Gal. iv. 23.* representing the unbelieving Jews, ver. 25. Note, 1. Many who can call Abraham father, yet are *born after the flesh*, *Matth. iii. 9.* 2. The carnal seed in the church are sooner brought forth than the spiritual. It is an easier thing to persuade men to assume the form of godliness, than to submit to the power of godliness.

## C H A P. XVII.

This chapter contains articles of agreement covenanted and concluded upon between the great Jehovah, the father of mercies, one the one part, and pious Abram, the father of the faithful, on the other part: Abram is therefore called the friend of God, not only because he was the man of his council, but because he was the man of his covenant, both these secrets were with him: mention was made of this covenant, chap. xv. 18. but here it is particularly drawn up and put into the form of a covenant, that Abram might have strong consolation. Here is, 1. The circumstances of the making of this covenant, the time and manner, ver. 1. and the posture Abram was in, ver. 3. 2. The covenant itself. In the general scope of it, ver. 1. And after in the particular instances. 1. That he should be the father of many nations, ver. 4, 6. and in token of that his name was changed, ver. 5. 2. That God would be a God to him and his seed, and would give them the land of Canaan, ver. 7, 8. And the seal of this part of the covenant was circumcision, ver. 9—14. 3. That he should have a son by Sarai, and in token of that her name was changed, ver. 15, 16. This promise Abram received, ver. 17. And his request for Ishmael (ver. 18.) was answered abundantly to his satisfaction, ver. 19—22. 4. The circumcision of Abram and his family, according to God's appointment, ver. 23. ad fin.

1. **A**ND when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God walk before me, and be thou perfect. 2. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. 3. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

Here is, 1. The time when God made Abram this gracious visit, when he was ninety-nine years old, full thirteen years after the

birth of Ishmael. (1.) So long it should seem, God's extraordinary appearances to Abram were intermitted; and all the communion he had with God was only in the usual way of ordinances and providences. Note, There are some special comforts which are not the daily bread, no not of the best saints, but they are favoured with them now and then. Convenient food they have; but not a continual feast on this side Heaven: (2.) So long the promise of Isaac was deferred. (1.) Perhaps to correct Abram's over-hasty marrying of Hagar. Note, The comforts we sinfully anticipate are justly delayed. (2.) That Abram and Sarai being so far stricken in age God's power in this matter might be the more magnified, and their faith the more tried. See *Deut. xxxii. 36.* *John xi. 6, 15.* (3.) That a Child so long waited for might be an Isaac, a son indeed, *Isa. liv. 1.*

2. The way in which God made this covenant with him; *The Lord appeared to Abram*, in the Shechinah, some visible display of God's immediate glorious presence with him. Note, God first makes himself known to us, and gives us a sight of him by faith; and then takes us into his covenant.

3. The posture Abram put himself into upon this occasion: *He fell on his face while God talked with him*, ver. 3. Either (1.) as one overcome by the brightness of the divine glory, and unable to bear the sight of it, though he had seen it several times before: Daniel and John did likewise, though they were also acquainted with the visions of the Almighty, *Dan. viii. 17.—x. 9, 15.* *Rev. i. 17.* Or, (2.) As one ashamed of himself, and blushing to think of the honours done to one so unworthy: he looks upon himself with humility, and upon God with reverence, and in token of both, *falls on his face*, putting himself into a posture of adoration. Note, 1. God graciously condescends to talk with those whom he takes into his covenant and communion with himself: *He talks with them by his word*, *Prov. vi. 22.* talks with them by his spirit, *John xiv. 26.* This honour have all his saints, 2. Those that are admitted into fellowship with God are, and must be, very humble and very reverent in their approaches to him. If we say we have fellowship with him, and the familiarity breeds contempt, we deceive ourselves. 3. Those that would receive comfort from God, must set themselves to give glory to God; and to worship at his footstool.

4. The general scope and summary of the covenant, laid down as the foundation, on which all the rest was built: and it is no other than the covenant of grace, still made with all believers in Jesus Christ, ver. 1. Observe here,

1. What we may expect to find God to us, *I am the Almighty God*: by this name he chose to make himself known to Abram rather than by his name Jehovah, *Exod. vi. 3.* He used it to Jacob, *Gen. xxxv. 11.* They called him by his name, *Gen. xxviii. 3.—xlvi. 14.—xlviii. 3.* It is the name of God that is mostly used throughout the book of Job; at least 30 times in the discourses of that book, in which Jehovah is used but once. After Moses, Jehovah is more frequently used, and this very rarely; I am El-shaddai: it speaks the almighty power of God, either, 1. As an avenger from *שׁוּר* he *destroyed* or *laid waste*, so some; and they think God took this title from the destruction of the old world. This is countenanced by *Isa. xlii. 6.* and *Joel i. 15.* Or, 2. As a benefactor, *שׁוּר* for *שׁוּר* who, and *י* it *sufficeth*: He is a God, that is enough. Or, as our old English translation reads it here very significantly, *I am God all-sufficient*. Note, The God with whom we have to do, is a *God that is enough*. (1.) He is enough in himself; he is self-sufficient; he hath every thing, and he needs not any thing. (2.) He is enough to us, if we be in covenant with him; we have all in him, and we have enough in him; enough to satisfy our most enlarged desires, enough to supply the defect of every thing else, and to secure to us a happiness for our immortal souls: See *Psal. xvi. 5, 6.—lxxiii. 25.*

2. What God requires that we be to him: the covenant is mutual, *walk before me, and be thou perfect*, that is, upright and sincere, for herein the covenant of grace is well ordered, that sincerity is our gospel perfection. Observe; 1. That to be religious is to walk before God in our integrity: it is to set God always before us, and to think and speak and act in every thing as those that are always under his eye. It is to have a constant regard to his word as our rule, and to his glory as our end in all our actions; and to be continually in his fear. It is to be inward with him in all the duties of religious worship, for in them particularly we walk before God, *1 Sam. ii. 30.* and to be intire for him in all holy conversation. I know no religion but sincerity: 2. That upright walking with God is the condition of our interest in his all-sufficiency: If we neglect him, or dissemble with him, we forfeit the benefit and comfort of our relation to him. 3. A continual regard to God's all-sufficiency will have a great influence upon our upright walking with him.

4. As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee; and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 5. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee. 6. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee.



The promise here is introduced with solemnity: as for me, faith the great God, behold, behold and admire it, behold and be assured of it, my covenant is with thee, as before, *ver. 2*. I will make my covenant. Note, the covenant of grace is a covenant of God's own making; this he glories in (as for me) and so may we. Now here,

1. It is promised to Abram, that he should be a father of many nations, *i. e. 1*. That his seed, after the flesh, should be very numerous, both in Isaac and in Ishmael, and in the sons of Keturah: something extraordinary is doubtless included in this promise, and we may suppose the event answered it, and that there have been, and are, more of the children of men descended from Abram than from any one man at equal distance with him, from Noah the common root. 2. That all believers in every age should be looked upon as his spiritual seed, and he should be called not only the friend of God, but the father of the faithful. In this sense the apostle directs us to understand this promise, *Rom. iv. 16, 17*. He is the father of those in every nation that by faith enter into covenant with God, and (as the Jewish writers express it) are gathered under the wings of the Divine Majesty.

2. In token of this, his name was changed from Abram, a high father, to Abraham, the father of a multitude. This was, (1.) to put an honour upon him: it is spoken of as the glory of the church, that she shall be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name, *Isa. lxii. 2*. Princes dignify their favourites by conferring new titles upon them, thus was Abraham dignified by him that is indeed the fountain of honour: all believers have a new name, *Rev. ii. 17*. Some think it added to the honour of Abraham's new name, that a letter of the name, Jehovah was inserted into it, as it was a disgrace to Jeconiah to have the first syllable of his name cut off because it was the same with the first syllable of that sacred name, *Jer. xxii. 28*. Believers are named from Christ, *Eph. iii. 15*. (2.) To encourage and confirm the faith of Abraham, while he was childless perhaps, even his own name was sometimes an occasion of grief to him, why should he be called a high father, who was not a father at all? But now God had promised him a numerous issue, and had given him a name which signified so much, that name was his joy. Note, God calleth things that are not as though they were. It is the apostle's observation upon this very thing, *Rom. iv. 17*. He called Abram the father of a multitude, because he should prove to be so in due time, though as yet he had but one child.

7. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. 8. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. 9. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. 10. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me, and you, and thy seed after thee; Every man-child among you shall be circumcised. 11. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.

Here is, 1. The continuance of the covenant; intimated in three things. (1.) It is established, not to be altered or revoked, it is fixed, it is ratified, it is made as firm as the divine power and truth can make it. (2.) It is entailed, it is a covenant, not with Abraham only, then it would die with him, but with his seed after him, not only his seed after the flesh, but his spiritual seed. (3.) It is everlasting in the evangelical sense and meaning of it. The covenant of grace is everlasting; it is from everlasting in the counsels of it, and to everlasting in the consequences of it; and the external administration of it is transmitted with the seal of it to the seed of believers, and the internal administration of it by the spirit of Christ's seed in every age. 2. The contents of the covenant; it is a covenant of promises, exceeding great and precious promises: Here are two, which indeed are all-sufficient. (1.) That God would be their God, *ver. 7, 8*. All the privileges of the covenant, all its joys, and all its hopes are summed up in this: a man needs desire no more than this to make him happy. What God is himself that he will be to his people; his wisdom theirs to guide and counsel them; his power theirs to protect and support them; his goodness theirs to supply and com-

fort them. What faithful worshippers can expect from the God they serve, believers shall find in God as theirs. This is enough yet not all.

(2.) That Canaan should be their everlasting possession, *ver. 8*. God had before promised this land to Abraham, and his seed, *chap. xv. 18*. But here, where it is promised for an everlasting possession, sure it must be looked upon as a type of Heaven's happiness, that everlasting rest which remains for the people of God, *Heb. iv. 9*. This is that better country to which Abraham had an eye, and the grant of which was, that which answered the vast extent and compass of that promise, that God would be to them a God, so that if God had not prepared and designed this, he would have been ashamed to be called their God, *Heb. xi. 16*. As the land of Canaan was secured to the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh, so Heaven is secured to all his spiritual seed, by a covenant, and for a possession truly everlasting. The offer of this eternal life is made in the word, and confirmed by the sacraments to all that are under the external administration of the covenant, and the earnest of it is given to all believers, *Eph. i. 14*. Canaan is here said to be the land wherein Abraham was a stranger; and Canaan is a land to which we are strangers, for it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

3. The token of the covenant, and that is circumcision, for the sake of which the covenant is itself called the covenant of circumcision, *Acts vii. 8*. It is here said to be the covenant which Abraham and his seed must keep, as a copy or counterpart, *ver. 9, 10*. it is called a sign and seal, *Rom. iv. 11*. for it was, (1.) A confirmation to Abraham and his seed, of those promises which were God's part of the covenant, assuring them that they should be fulfilled; that in due time Canaan should be theirs: and the continuance of this ordinance after Canaan was theirs, intimates, that that promise looked further to another Canaan, which they must still be in expectation of: See *Heb. iv. 8*. (2.) An obligation upon Abraham and his seed to that duty which was their part of the covenant; not only to the duty of accepting the covenant and consenting to it, and the putting away of the corruption of the flesh, which were more immediately and primarily signified by circumcision, but in general to the observation of all God's commands as they should at any time hereafter be intimated and made known to them: for circumcision made men debtors to do the whole law, *Gal. v. 3*. They who will have God to be to them a God, must consent and resolve to be to him a people.

Now, 1. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, for all things by the law were purged with blood, *Heb. ix. 22*. See *Exod. xxiv. 8*. But the blood of Christ being shed, all bloody ordinances are now abolished; circumcision therefore gives way to baptism. 2. It was peculiar to the males, though the women also were included in the covenant, for the man is the head of the woman. In our kingdom the oath of allegiance is required only from men: some think the blood of the males only was shed in circumcision because respect was had in it to Jesus Christ, and his blood. 3. It was the flesh of the fore-skin that was to be cut off, because it is by ordinary generation that sin is propagated, and with an eye to the promised seed, who was to come from the loins of Abraham. Christ having not yet offered himself for us. God would have man to enter into covenant by the offering of some part of his own body, and no part could be better spared. It is a secret part of the body, for the true circumcision is that of the heart: this honour God put upon an uncomely part, *1 Cor. xii. 23, 24*. 4. The ordinance was to be administered to children when they were eight days old, and not sooner, that they might gather some strength, to be able to undergo the pain of it, and that at least one sabbath might pass over them. 5. The children of the strangers, of whom the master of the family was the true domestic owner, were to be circumcised, *ver. 12, 13*. which looked favourably upon the Gentiles, who should, in due time, be brought into the family of Abraham, by faith: See *Gal. iii. 14*. 6. The religious observance of this institution was required under a very severe penalty, *ver. 14*. The contempt of circumcision was a contempt of the covenant; if the parents did not circumcise their children, it was at their peril, as in the case of Moses, *Exod. iv. 24, 25*. And those that were not circumcised in their infancy, if, when they grew up, they did not themselves come under this ordinance, God would surely reckon with them: If they cut not off the flesh of their fore-skin, God would cut them off from their people. It is a dangerous thing to make light of divine institutions, and to live in the neglect of them.

15. And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. 16. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her; yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. 17. Then Abram fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? 18. And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! 19. And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call



call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. 20. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. 21. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. 22. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

Here is, 1. The promise made to Abraham of a son by Sarai, that son in whom the promise made to him should be fulfilled, that he should be the father of many nations, for she also shall be a mother of nations, and kings of people shall be of her, *ver. 16*. Note, 1. God reveals the purposes of his good-will to his people by degrees. God had told Abraham long before, that he should have a son, but never till now that he should have a son by Sarai. 2. The blessing of the Lord makes fruitful, and adds no sorrow with it, no such sorrow as was in Hagar's case. I will bless her, with the blessing of fruitfulness, and then thou shalt have a son of her. 3. Civil government and order is a great blessing to the church. It is promised not only that people, but kings of people should be of her; not a headless rout, but a well modelled, well governed society.

2. The ratification of this promise was the change of Sarai's name into Sarah, *ver. 15*. The same letter added to her name that was to Abraham's, and for the same reasons. Sarai signifies my princess, as if her honour were confined to one family only, Sarah signifies a princess, viz. of multitudes; or, signifying that from her should come the Messiah, the prince, even the prince of the kings of the earth.

3. Abraham's joyful, thankful entertainment of this gracious promise, *ver. 17*. Upon this occasion he expressed, (1.) Great humility, he fell on his face. Note, The more honours and favours God confers upon us, the more low we should be in our own eyes, and the more reverent and submissive before God. (2.) Great joy, he laughed: it was a laughter of delight, not of distrust. Note, Even the promises of a holy God as well as his performances are the joys of holy souls: there is the joy of faith, as well as the joy of fruition. Now it was that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, now he saw it and was glad, *Job. viii. 56*. for as he saw Heaven in the promise of Canaan, so he saw Christ in the promise of Isaac. (3.) Great admiration, *Shall a child be born to him that is 100 years old?* He doth not here speak of it as at all doubtful, for we are sure he staggered not at the promise, *Rom. iv. 20*. But as very wonderful, and that which could not be effected but by the almighty power of God, and as very kind, and a favour which was the more affecting and obliging for this, that it was extremely surprising, *Psal. cxxvi. 1, 2*.

4. Abraham's prayer for Ishmael, *ver. 18*. *O that Ishmael might live before thee!* This he speaks not as desiring that Ishmael might be preferred before the son he should have by Sarah, but, as dreading lest he should be abandoned and forsaken of God, he puts up this petition on his behalf. Now God is talking with him he thinks he has a very fair opportunity to speak a good word for Ishmael, and he will not let it slip. Note, 1. Though we ought not to prescribe to God, yet he gives us leave in prayer to be humbly free with him, and particular in making known our requests, *Phil. iv. 6*. whatever is the matter of our care and fear should be spread before God in prayer. 2. That it is the duty of parents to pray for their children, for all their children, as Job who offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all, *Job i. 5*. Abraham would not have it thought that when God promised him a son by Sarah, which he so much desired, that then his son by Hagar was forgotten, no, still he bears him upon his heart, and shews a concern for him. The prospect of further favours must not make us unmindful of former favours. 3. That the great thing we should desire of God for our children, is, that they may live before him, i. e. that they may be kept in covenant with him, and may have grace to walk before him in their uprightness; spiritual blessings are the best blessings, and which we should be most earnest with God, for, both for ourselves and others. Those live well that live before God.

5. God's answer to this prayer; and it is an answer of peace; Abraham could not say he sought God's face in vain.

1. Common blessings are secured to Ishmael, *ver. 20*. As for Ishmael, whom thou art in so much care about, I have heard thee, he shall find favour for thy sake, I have blessed him, i. e. I have many blessings in store for him. (1.) His posterity shall be numerous, I will multiply him exceedingly, more than his neighbours: this is the fruit of the blessing, as that, *Gen. i. 26*. (2.) They shall be considerable, twelve princes shall he beget; we may charitably hope that spiritual blessings also were bestowed upon him, though the visible church was not brought out of his loins, and the covenant was not lodged in his family. Note, Great plenty of outward good things is often given to those children of godly parents who are born after the flesh, for their parents sake.

2. Covenant blessings are reserved for Isaac, and appropriated to him, *ver. 19, 21*. If Abraham, in his prayer for Ishmael, meant that he would have the covenant made with him, and the promised seed to come from him, then God did not answer him in the letter, but in that which was equivalent; nay, which was every way better. (1.) God repeats to him the promise of a son by Sarah, she shall bear thee a son indeed. Note, (1.) Even true believers need to have God's promises doubled and repeated to them, that they may have strong consolation, *Heb. vi. 18*. (2.) Children of the promise are children indeed. (2.) He names that child, call him Isaac, Laughter, because Abraham rejoiced in spirit when this son was promised him. Note, If God's promises be our joy, his mercies promised shall in due time be our exceeding joy. Christ will be laughter to them that look for him: they that now rejoice in hope, shall shortly rejoice in having that which they hope for: this is laughter that is not mad. (3.) He entails the covenant upon that child, *I will establish my covenant with him*. Note, God takes whom he pleaseth into covenant with himself, according to the good pleasure of his will: See *Rom. ix. 8, 18*.

Thus was the covenant settled between God and Abraham, with its several limitations and remainders, and then the conference ended, *God left off talking with him*, and the vision disappeared, *God went up from Abraham*. Note, Our communion with God here is broken and interrupted, in Heaven it will be a continual and everlasting feast.

23. And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of the fore-skin, in the self-same day, as God had said unto him. 24. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. 25. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. 26. In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

We have here Abraham's obedience to the law of circumcision: He himself, and all his family, were circumcised, so receiving the token of the covenant, and distinguishing themselves from other families that had no part nor lot in the matter. 1. It was an implicit obedience; he did as God had said unto him, and did not ask why or wherefore. God's will was not only a law to him, but a reason; he did it because God bid him. 2. It was a speedy obedience; *in the self-same day*, *ver. 23, 26*. Sincere obedience is not dilatory, *Psal. cxix. 60*. while the command is yet sounding in our ears, and the sense of duty is fresh, it is good to apply ourselves to it immediately, lest we deceive ourselves by putting it off to a more convenient season. 3. It was an universal obedience; he did not circumcise his family, and excuse himself, but set them an example; nor did he take the comfort of the seal of the covenant to himself only, but desired that all his might share with him in it: this is a good example to masters of families, they and their houses must serve the Lord. Though God's covenant was not established with Ishmael, yet he was circumcised; for children of believing parents, as such, have a right to the privileges of the visible church, and the seals of the covenant, whatever they may prove afterwards; Ishmael is blessed, and therefore circumcised. 4. Abraham did this, though much might be objected against it: though circumcision was painful, tho' to grown men it was shameful, though while they were sore and unfit for action their enemies might take advantage against them, as Simeon and Levi did against the Shechemites; though Abraham was 99 years old, and had been justified and accepted of God long since, though so odd a thing done religiously might be turned to his reproach by the Canaanite and the Perizzite that dwelt then in the land, yet God's command was sufficient to answer these, and a thousand such objections, what God requires we must do, not *conferring with flesh and blood*.

## C H A P. XVIII.

*We have an account in this chapter of another interview between God and Abraham, probably within a few days after the former, as a reward of his cheerful obedience to the law of circumcision: Here is* (1.) *The kind visit which God made him, and the kind entertainment he gave to that visit*, *ver. 1—8*. (2.) *The matters discoursed of between them*. 1. *The purposes of God's love concerning Sarah*, *ver. 9—15*. 2. *The purposes of God's wrath concerning Sodom*. 1. *The discovery God made to Abraham of his design to destroy Sodom*, *ver. 16—22*. 2. *The intercession Abraham made for Sodom*, *ver. 23—33*.

1. **A**ND the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day. 2. And he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw



saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himself toward the ground, 3. And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant. 4. Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your heart; after that you shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said, 6. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. 7. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. 8. And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

This appearance of God to Abraham seems to have had in it more of freedom and familiarity, and less of grandeur and majesty, than those we have hitherto read of, and therefore more resembles that great visit, which, in the fulness of time, the son of God was to make to the world; when the word would be made flesh, and appear as one of us. Observe here,

1. How Abraham expected strangers, and how richly his expectations were answered, ver. 1. 2. *He sat in the tent-door, in the heat of the day*, not so much to repose or divert himself, as to seek an opportunity of doing good, by giving entertainment to strangers and travellers, there being perhaps no inns to accommodate them. Note, 1. We are likely to have the most comfort of those good works that we are most free and forward to. 2. God graciously visits those in whom he hath first raised the expectation of him, and manifests himself to those that wait for him. When Abraham was thus sitting, he saw three men coming towards him. These three men were three spiritual heavenly beings, now assuming human bodies, that they might be visible to Abraham, and conversable with him. Some think they were all created angels, others, that one of them was the Son of God, the angel of the covenant, whom Abraham distinguished from the rest, ver. 3. and who is called Jehovah, ver. 13. The apostle improves this for the encouragement of hospitality, *Heb. xiii. 2.* Those that have been forward to entertain strangers have entertained angels, to their unspeakable honour and satisfaction. Where, upon a prudent and impartial judgment, we see no cause to suspect ill, charity teacheth us to hope well, and to shew kindness accordingly; it is better to feed five drones or wasps than starve one bee.

2. How Abraham entertained those strangers, and how kindly his entertainment was excepted. The Holy Ghost takes particular notice of the very free and affectionate welcome which Abraham gave to the strangers. (1.) He was mighty complaisant and respectful to them; forgetting his age and gravity he *ran to meet them* in the most obliging manner, and made his honours like a compleat courtier, *bowing himself towards the ground*, though as yet he knew nothing of them, but that they appeared graceful fashionable men. Note, religion doth not destroy but improve good manners, and teaches us to honour all men. Decent civility is a great ornament to piety. (2.) He was very earnest and importunate for their stay, and took it as a great favour, ver. 3, 4. Note, (1.) It becomes those whom God hath blessed with plenty to be liberal and open-hearted in their entertainments, according to their ability, and not in complement, but cordially to bid their friends welcome, we should take a pleasure in shewing kindness to any, for both God and man love a cheerful giver; who would *eat the bread of him that has an evil eye*? *Prov. xxiii. 6, 7.* (2.) Those that would have communion with God must earnestly desire it and pray for it. God is a guest worth courting. (3.) His entertainment though it was very free, yet it was plain and homely, and there was nothing in it of the gait and niceness of these times. His dining-room was an arbour under a tree; no rich table-linnen, no side-board set with plate; his feast was a joint or two of veal, and some *cakes baked on the hearth*, and both hastily dressed up: here were not dainties, no varieties, no forced-meats, no sweat-meats, but good plain wholesome food, though Abraham was very rich, and his guests very honourable. Note, We ought not to be curious in our diet: let us be thankful for food convenient, though it be homely and common, and not be *desirous of dainties for they are deceitful meat* to those that love them and set their hearts upon them. (4.) He and his wife were both of them very officious, and busy to accommodate their guests with the best they had. Sarah herself is Cook and Baker; Abraham runs to fetch the calf, brings out the milk and butter, and thinks it not below him to wait at table, that he might shew how heartily welcome his guests were. Note, 1. Those that have real merit need not take state upon them, nor are their prudent condescensions any disparagement to them. 2. Hearty friendship will stoop to any thing but sin. Christ himself has taught us to wash one another's feet in humble love. They that thus abase themselves shall be exalted. Here Abraham's faith shewed itself in good works,

and so must ours, else it is dead, *Jam. ii. 21.* The father of the faithful was famous for charity, and generosity, and good house-keeping: and we must learn of him to *do good and communicate*. Job did not eat his morsels alone, *Job xxxi. 17.*

9. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, behold, in the tent. 10. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life, and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. 11. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age: and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself saying, After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? 13. And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14. Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed will I return unto thee according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. 15. Then Sarah denied saying, I laughed not: for she was afraid. And he said, Nay, but thou didst laugh.

These heavenly guests being sent to confirm the promise lately made to Abraham, that he should have a son by Sarah, while they are receiving Abraham's kind entertainment, thus return his kindness: he receiveth angels, and hath angels reward; a gracious message from Heaven, *Matth. x. 41.*

1. Care is taken that Sarah should be within hearing. She must conceive by faith, and therefore the promise must be made to her, *Heb. xi. 11.* It was the modest usage of that time that the women did not sit at meat with men, at least not with strangers, but confined themselves to their own apartments; therefore Sarah is here out of sight, but she must not be out of hearing. The angels enquire, ver. 9, *Where is Sarah thy wife?* By naming her, they gave intimation enough to Abraham, that though they seemed strangers yet they very well knew him and his family: by enquiring after her they shewed a friendly kind concern for the family and relations of one whom they found respectful to them: It is a piece of common civility which ought to proceed from a principle of Christian love, and then it is sanctified. And by speaking of her, she over-hearing it, they drew her to listen to what was further to be said. *Where is Sarah thy wife?* say the angels; *Behold, in the tent*, said Abraham; where should she be else? There she is in her place, as she uses to be, and is now within call. Note, 1. The daughters of Sarah must learn of her, to be *chaste, keepers at home*, *Titus ii. 5.* There is nothing got by gadding. 2. Those are most likely to receive comfort from God, and his promises that are in their place, and in the way of their duty, *Luke ii. 8.*

2. The promise is then renewed, and ratified, that she should have a son, ver. 10. *I will certainly return unto thee*, and visit thee, next time with the performance, as now I do with the promise. God will return to those that bid him welcome, entertain his visits: I will return thy kindness, *Sarah thy wife shall have a son*; it is repeated again, ver. 14. Thus the promises of the Messiah were often repeated in the Old Testament for the strengthening of the faith of God's people. We are slow of heart to believe, and therefore have need of line upon line to the same purpose. This is that word of promise which the apostle quotes, *Rom. ix. 9.* as that by the virtue of which Isaac was born. Note, 1. The same blessings which others have from common providence, believers have from the promise which makes them very sweet, and very sure. 2. The spiritual seed of Abraham owe their life, and joy, and hope, and all to the promise. They are born by the word of God, *1 Pet. i. 23.*

3. Sarah thinks this too good news to be true, and therefore cannot as yet find in her heart to believe it, ver. 12. *Sarah laughed within herself.* It was not a pleasing laughter of faith, like Abraham's, chap. xvii. 17. but it was a laughter of doubting and mistrust. Note, the same thing may be done from very different principles, which God only can judge of, who knows the heart. The great objection which Sarah could not get over was her age. *I am waxed old*, and past child-bearing in a course of nature, especially having been hitherto barren, and, which magnifies the difficulty, *My lord is old also.* Observe here,

(1.) That Sarah calls Abraham her lord; it was the only good word in this saying, and the Holy Ghost takes notice of it to her honour, and recommends it to the imitation of all Christian wives, *1 Pet. iii. 6.* *Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord*, in token of respect and subjection. Thus must the wife reverence her husband, *Eph. v. 33.* And thus must we be apt to take notice of what is spoken decently and well, to the honour of them that speak it, though it may be mixed with that which is amiss, over which we should cast a mantle of love.

(2.) That human improbability oft sets up in contradiction to the divine promise. The objections of sense are very apt to stumble and puzzle the weak faith even of true believers. It is hard to cleave to the first cause when second causes frown.

(3.) That



(3.) That even there where there is true faith, yet there are often fore conflicts with unbelief; Sarah could say, Lord I believe, (*Heb. xi. 11.*) and yet must say, *Lord help my unbelief.*

4. The angel reproves the indecent expressions of her distrust, ver. 13, 14. Observe, 1. Though Sarah was now most kindly and generously entertaining these angels, yet when she did amiss they reproved her for it, as Christ reproved Martha in her own house, *Luke x. 40, 41.* If our friends be kind to us, we must not therefore be so unkind to them as to suffer sin upon them. 2. God gave this reproof to Sarah by Abraham her husband, to him he said, *Why did Sarah laugh?* Perhaps because he had not told her of the promise which had been given him some time before to this purpose, which if he had communicated to her with it's ratifications, she would not have been so surprized at it now. Or, Abraham was told of it that he might tell her of it; mutual reproof when there is occasion for it is one of the duties of that relation. 3. The reproof itself is plain and backed with a good reason. *Wherefore did Sarah laugh?* Note, 1. It is good to enquire into the reason of our laughter, that it may not be the laughter of the fool, *Eccl. vii. 6.* Wherefore did I laugh? 2. Our unbelief and distrust is a great offence to the God of Heaven. He justly takes it ill to have the objections of sense set up in contradiction to his promise, as *Luke i. 18.* Here is a question asked which is enough to answer all the cavils of flesh and blood; *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* *Hebr. too wonderful,* i. e. 1. Is any thing so secret as to escape his cognizance? No, not Sarah's laughing, though it was only *within herself.* Or, 2, Is any thing so difficult as to exceed his power? No, not the giving of a child to Sarah in her old age.

5. Sarah foolishly endeavours to conceal her fault, ver. 15. *She denied, saying, I did not laugh?* thinking no-body could disprove her, and she told this lie, because *she was afraid,* but it was in vain to conceal it from an all-seeing eye, she was told to her shame, *Thou didst laugh.* Now, 1. There seems to be in Sarah a retractation of her distrust. Now she perceived by laying circumstances together, that it was a divine promise which had been made concerning her, she renounces all doubting distrustful thoughts about it. But, 2. There was withal a sinful attempt to cover a sin with a lie. It is a shame to do amiss, but a greater shame to deny it, for thereby we *add iniquity to our iniquity.* Fear of a rebuke often betrays us to this snare. See *Isa. lvii. 11.* *Whom hast thou feared, that thou liest?* But we deceive ourselves if we think to impose upon God; he can and will bring truth to light to our shame. *He that covers his sin cannot prosper,* for the day is coming which will discover it.

16. And the men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom: And Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. 17. And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; 18. Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19. For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. 20. And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21. I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. 22. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went towards Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

The messengers from Heaven had now dispatched one part of their business, which was an errand of grace to Abram and Sarah, and which they delivered first, but now they have before them work of another nature. Sodom is to be destroyed, and they must do it, *chap. xix. 13.* Note, As with the Lord there is mercy, so he is the God to whom vengeance belongs. Pursuant to their commission we here find, 1. That they looked towards Sodom, ver. 16. they set their faces against it in wrath; as God is said to look unto the host of the Egyptians, *Exod. xiv. 24.* Note, Tho' God has long seemed to connive at sinners, from which they have inferred, that the Lord doth not see; doth not regard, yet when the day of his wrath comes he will look towards them. 2. That they went towards Sodom, ver. 22. And accordingly we find two of them at Sodom, *chap. xix. 1.* whether the third was the Lord before whom Abraham yet stood, and to whom he drew near, ver. 23. as most think, or whether the third left them before they came to Sodom, and the Lord before Abraham stood was the Shechinah, or that appearance of the divine glory which Abraham had formerly seen and conversed with is, uncertain. However, we have here (1.) the honour Abraham did to his guests, *he went with them to bring them on the way,* as one that was loth to part with such good company, and was desirous

to pay his utmost respects to them. This is a piece of civility, proper to be showed to our friends, but it must be done as the apostle directs, *3 Joh. 6. after a godly sort.* (2.) The honour they did to him; for those that honour God, he will honour; God communicated to Abraham his purpose to destroy Sodom, and not only so, but entered into a free conference with him about it. Having taken him more closely than before into covenant with himself, *chap. xvii.* he here admits him into more intimate communion with himself than ever, as the man of his council. Observe here,

1. God's friendly thoughts concerning Abraham, ver. 17, 18, 19. where we have his resolution to make known to Abraham his purposes concerning Sodom, with the reasons of it. If Abraham had not brought them on their way, perhaps he had not been thus favoured, but he that loves to walk with wise men shall be wise, *Prov. xiii. 20.* See how God is pleased to argue with himself; *shall I hide from Abraham* (or as some read it, *am I concealing from Abraham*) *that thing which I do?* Can I go about such a thing, and not tell Abraham? Thus doth God in his councils express himself after the manner of men, with deliberation. But why must Abraham be of the cabinet council? The Jews suggest, that because God had granted the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed, therefore he would not destroy those cities which were a part of that land, without his knowledge and consent. But God here gives two other reasons. (1.) Abraham must know, for he is a friend and a favourite, and one that God has a particular kindness for, and great things in store for. He is to become a great nation, and not only so, but in the Messiah which is to come from his loins, *All nations of the earth shall be blessed.* Note, *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him,* *Psal. xxv. 14.* *Prov. iii. 32.* Those that by faith live a life of communion with God, cannot but know more of his mind than other people, tho' not with a prophetic, yet with a prudential practical knowledge. They have a better insight than others into what is present, *Hof. xiv. 9.* *Psal. cvii. 43.* and a better foresight of what is to come, at least so much as sufficeth for their conduct and for their comfort. (2.) Abraham must know, for he will teach his household, ver. 19. *I know Abraham very well, that will command his children, and his household after him.* Consider this, 1. As a very bright part of Abraham's character and example. He not only prayed with his family, but he taught them, as a man of knowledge, nay, he commanded them as a man in authority, and was prophet and king, as well as priest in his own house. Observe (1.) That God having made the covenant with him and his seed, and his household being circumcised, pursuant to that, he was very careful to teach and rule them well. Those that expect family blessings, must make conscience of family duty. If our children be the Lord's, they must be nursed for him; if they wear his livery, they must be trained up in his work. (2.) That Abram not only took care of his children, but of his household; his servants were catechised servant. Masters of families should instruct and inspect the manners all under their roof. The poorest servants have precious souls that must be looked after. (3.) That Abraham made it his care and business to promote practical religion in his family. He did not fill their heads with matters of nice speculation or doubtful disputation, but he taught them to keep *the way of the Lord,* and to do judgment and justice, that is, to be serious and devout in the worship of God, and to be honest in their dealings with all men. (4.) That Abraham herein had an eye to posterity, and was in care not only that his household with him, but that his household after him, should keep the way of the Lord; that religion might flourish in his family when he was in his grave. (5.) That his doing this was the fulfilling the conditions of the promises which God had made him. Those only can expect the benefit of the promises that make conscience of their duty.

2. We may consider this as the reason why God would make known to him his purpose concerning Sodom, because he was communicative of his knowledge, and improved it for the benefit of those that were under his charge. Note, To him that hath shall be given, *Matth. xiii. 12—25—29.* Those that make a good use of their knowledge shall know more.

3. God's friendly talk with Abraham, in which he makes known to him his purpose concerning Sodom, and allows him a liberty of application to him about that matter.

1. He tells him of the evidence there was against Sodom, ver. 20. *The cry of Sodom is great.* Note, Some sins, and the sins of some sinners, cry aloud to Heaven for vengeance. The iniquity of Sodom was crying iniquity, i. e. it was so very provoking that it even urged God to punish.

2. The enquiry he would make upon this evidence, ver. 21. *I will go down now and see.* Not as if there were any thing concerning which God is in doubt or in the dark, but he is pleased thus to express himself after the manner of men. 1. To shew the uncontestable equity of all his judicial proceedings. Men are apt to suggest that his way is *not equal,* but let them know that his judgments are the result of an eternal counsel, and are never rash, or sudden resolves. He never punishes upon report, or common fame, or the information of others, but upon his own certain and infallible knowledge. 2. To give example to magistrates and those in authority with the utmost care and diligence to



to enquire into the merits of a cause before they give judgment upon it. 3. Perhaps the decree is here spoken of as not yet peremptory, that room and encouragement might be given to Abraham to make intercession for them. Thus God looked if there were any to intercede, *Iſa. lix. 16.*

23. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24. Peradventure be there fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? 25. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? 26. And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. 27. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD which am but dust and ashes. 28. Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, if I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. 29. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said I will not do it for forty sake. 30. And he said unto him, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said I will not do it, if I find thirty there. 31. And he said, behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said I will not destroy it for twentys sake. 32. And he said, O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said I will not destroy it for tens sake. 33. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham and Abraham returned unto his place.

Communion with God is kept up by the word and prayer. In the word God speaks to us, in prayer we speak to him. God had spoken to Abraham his purposes concerning Sodom, now from thence Abraham takes occasion to speak to God on Sodom's behalf. Note, God's word then doth us good when it furnishes us with matter for prayer, and excites us to it. When God hath spoken to us we must consider what we have to say to him upon it.

Observe, 1. The solemnity of Abraham's address to God on this occasion, *ver. 23.* Abraham drew near. The expression intimates, (1.) A holy concern. He *engageth his heart* to approach to God, *Jer. xxx. 21.* shall Sodom be destroyed, and I not speak one word for it. (2.) A holy confidence; he drew near *with an assurance of faith*, drew near *as a prince*, *Job xxxi. 37.* Note, When we address ourselves to the duty of prayer we ought to remember that we are drawing near to God, that we may be filled with a reverence of him, *Lev. x. 3.*

2. The general scope of this prayer. It is the first solemn prayer we have upon record in the Bible, and it is a prayer for the sparing of Sodom. Abraham no doubt greatly abhorred the wickedness of Sodom, he would not have lived among them, as Lot did, if they would have given him the best estate in their country, and yet he prayed earnestly for them. Note, Tho' sin is to be hated, sinners are to be pitied and prayed for. God delights not in their death, nor should we desire to deprecate the woeful day.

1. He begins with a prayer that the righteous among them might be spared, and not involved in the common calamity; having an eye particularly to just Lot, whose disingenuous carriage towards him, he had long since forgiven and forgotten, witness his friendly zeal to rescue him before by his sword, and now by his prayers.

2. He improves this into a petition that all might be spared for the sake of the righteous that were among them. God himself countenancing this request, and in effect putting him upon it by his answer to his first address, *ver. 26.* Note, We must pray not only for ourselves, but for others also, for we are members of the same body, at least of the same body of mankind. *All we are brethren.*

3. The particular graces eminent in this prayer.

1. Here is *great faith*, and it is the prayer of faith that is the prevailing prayer. His faith pleads with God, orders the cause, and fills his mouth with arguments. He acts faith especially upon the righteousness of God, and is very confident, (1.) *That God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked*, *ver. 23.* No, *that be far from thee*, *ver. 25.* We must never entertain any thought that derogates from the honour of God's righteousness. See *Rom. iii. 5, 6.* Note, 1. The righteous are mingled with the wicked in this world. Among the best there is commonly some bad, and among the worst some good. Even in Sodom, one Lot. 2. Tho' the right-

eous be among the wicked, yet the righteous God will not, certainly he will not, *destroy the righteous with the wicked.* Tho' in this world they may be involved in the same common calamities, yet in the great day a distinction will be made. (2.) *That the righteous shall not be as the wicked*, *ver. 25.* Tho' they may suffer with them, yet they do not suffer like them. Common calamities are quite another thing to the righteous, than what they are to to the wicked, *Iſa. xxvii. 7.* (3.) *That the judge of all the earth will do right*, undoubtedly he will, because he is the judge of all the earth, it is the apostle's argument, *Rom. iii. 5, 6.* Note, 1. God is the judge of all the earth, he gives charge to all, takes cognizance of all, and will pass sentence upon all. 2. That God Almighty never did, nor never will do, any wrong to any of the creatures; either by with-holding that which is right, or exacting more than is right, *Job xxxiv. 10, 11.*

2. Here is great humility appearing in this address.

(1.) A deep sense of his own unworthiness, *ver. 27.* *Behold now I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes*; and again, *ver. 21,* he speaks as one amazed at his own boldness, and the liberty God graciously allowed him, considering God's greatness, he is the Lord, and his own meanness but dust and ashes. Note, 1. The greatness of men, the most considerable and deserving are but dust and ashes, mean and vile before God; despicable, frail, and dying. 2. Whenever we draw near to God it becomes us reverently to acknowledge the vast distance that there is between us and God. He is the Lord of glory, we are worms of the earth. 3. The access we have to the throne of grace, and the freedom of speech allowed us is just matter of humble wonder, *2 Sam. vii. 18.*

(2.) An awful dread of God's displeasure. *O let not the Lord be angry*, *ver. 30,* and again *ver. 32.* Note, 1. The importunity which believers use in their addresses to God is such, that if they were dealing with a man like themselves, they could not but fear that he would be angry with them. But he with whom we have to do is *God and not man*, and however he may seem, is not really angry with the prayers of the upright, *Psal. lxxx. 4.* for they are *his delight*, *Prov. xv. 8.* and he is pleased when he is wrestled with. 2. That even when we receive special tokens of the divine favour, we ought to be jealous over ourselves, lest we make ourselves obnoxious to the divine displeasure, and therefore must bring the mediator with us in the arms of our faith, to atone for the iniquity of our holy things.

3. Here is *great charity* appearing in this address.

(1.) A charitable opinion of Sodom's character: as bad as it was he thought there were several good people in it. It becomes us to hope the best of the worst places. Of the two it is better err on that extrem.

(2.) A charitable desire of Sodom's welfare: he used all his interest at the throne of grace for mercy for them. We never find him thus earnest in pleading with God for himself and his family, as here for Sodom.

4. Here is *great boldness*, and believing confidence in this address. (1.) He took the liberty to pitch upon a certain number of righteous ones which he supposed might be in Sodom. Suppose there be fifty, *ver. 24.* (2.) He drew upon God's concessions, again and again. As God granted much, he still begged more, in hopes to gain his point. (3.) He brought the terms as low as he could for shame, having prevailed for mercy if there were but ten righteous ones in five cities, and perhaps so low that he concluded they would have been spared. (4.) The success of the prayer. He that thus wrestled prevailed wonderfully, as a prince he had power with God: it was but ask and have. 1. God's general good will appear in this, that he consented to spare the wicked for the sake of the righteous. See how swift God is to shew mercy, he even seeks a reason for it. See what great blessings good people are to any place, and how little those befriend themselves that hate and persecute them. 2. His particular favour to Abraham appeared in this, that he did not leave off granting, till Abraham left off asking. Such is the power of prayer. Why then did Abraham leave off asking when he had prevailed so far as to get the place spared if there were but ten righteous in it? Either, (1.) Because he owned that they deserved to perish if there were not so many; *as the dresser of the vineyard*, who consented that the barren tree should be cut down if one year's trial more did not make it fruitful, *Luke xiii. 9.* Or, (2.) because God restrained his spirit from asking any further. When God hath determined the ruin of a place, he forbids it to be prayed for, *Jer. vii. 16.—xi. 14.—xiv. 11.*

Lastly, here is the breaking up of the conference, *ver. 33.* (1.) The Lord went his way. The visions of God must not be constant in this world, where it is by faith only that we are to set God before us. God did not go away till Abraham had said all he had to say, for he is never weary of hearing prayer, *Iſa. lix. 1.*

(2.) *Abraham returned unto his place*; not puffed up with the honour done him, nor by these extraordinary interviews taken off from the ordinary course of duty; he returned to his place to wait what the event would be; and it proved that his prayer was heard, and yet Sodom not spared, because there were not ten righteous in it. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God.



## C H A P. XIX.

*The contents of this chapter we have, 2 Pet. ii. 6, 7, 8. where we find that God turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow. And delivered just Lot. It is the history of Sodom's ruin, and Lot's rescue from that ruin. We read, chap. xviii, of God's coming to take a view of the present state of Sodom, what it's wickedness was, and what righteous there were in it: now here we have the result of that enquiry. 1. It was found upon trial that Lot was very good, ver. 1, 2, 3. and it did not appear that there were any more of the same character. 2. It was found, that the Sodomites were very wicked, and vile, ver. 4—11. 3. Special care was therefore taken for the securing of Lot, and his family, in a place of safety, ver. 12—23. 4. Mercy having rejoiced therein, justice shews itself in the ruin of Sodom, and of Lot's wife, ver. 24—26. with a general repetition of the story, ver. 27—29. 5. A foul sin that Lot was guilty of in committing incest with his two daughters, ver. 30, ad fin.*

1. **A**ND there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2. And he said, Behold, now my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servants house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, but we will abide in the street all night. 3. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house: and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

These angels it is likely were two of the three that had just before been with Abraham, the two created angels that were sent to execute God's purpose concerning Sodom. Observe here, 1. There was but one good man in Sodom, and these heavenly messengers soon found him out. Wherever we are, we should enquire out those of the place that live in the fear of God, and chuse to associate ourselves with them: Matth. x. 11. *Enquire who is worthy, and there abide.* Those of the same country, when they are in a foreign country, love to be together. 2. Lot sufficiently distinguished himself from the rest of his neighbours, at this time, which plainly set a mark upon him. He that did not act like the rest must not fare like the rest. 1. Lot sat in the gate of Sodom at even; when it is likely the rest were tippling and drinking, he sat alone waiting an opportunity to do good. 2. He was extremely respectful to men, whose mien and aspect was sober and serious, tho' they did not come in state. He bowed himself to the ground when he met them, as if upon the first view he discerned something divine in them. 3. He was hospitable, and very free and generous in his invitations and entertainments. He courted these strangers to his house, and to the best accommodations he had, and gave them all the evidences that could be of his sincerity: for, (1.) When the angels, to try whether he were hearty in the invitation, declined the acceptance of it at first, (which is the common usage of modesty, and no reproach at all to truth and honesty) their refusal did but make him more importunate; for he *pressed upon them greatly*, ver. 3. Partly because he would by no means have them to expose themselves to the inconveniencies and perils of lodging in the street of Sodom, and partly because he was desirous of their company and converse. He had not seen two such honest faces in Sodom this great while. Note, Those that live in bad places should know how to value the society of those that are wise and good, and earnestly desire it. (2.) When the angels accepted his invitation he treated them nobly, he made a feast for them, and thought it well bestowed on such guests. Note, Good people should be (with prudence) generous people.

4. But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter. 5. And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. 6. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him. 7. And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8. Behold now, I have two daughters, which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. 9. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and

came near to break the door. 10. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. 11. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

Now it appeared beyond contradiction, that the cry of Sodom was no louder than there was cause for. This night's work was enough to fill the measure. For we find here,

1. That they were all wicked, ver. 4. Wickedness was grown universal, and they were unanimous in any vile design. Here were old and young, and all from every quarter engaged in this riot. The old were not past it, and the young were soon come up to it; either they had no magistrates to keep the peace, and protect the peaceable, or their magistrates were themselves aiding and abetting. Note, When the disease of sin is become epidemical, it is fatal to any place, *Isa. i. 5, 6, 7.*

2. That they were arrived to the highest pitch of wickedness; they were *sinners before the Lord exceedingly*, chap. xiii. 13. for,

(1.) It was the most unnatural and abominable wickedness, that they were now set upon, a sin which still bears their name, and is called Sodomy. They were carried headlong by those vile affections, (*Rom. i. 26, 27.*) which are worse than brutish, and the eternal reproach of the human nature, and which cannot be thought of without horror by those that have the least spark of virtue, and any remains of natural light and conscience. Note, Those that allow themselves in unnatural uncleanness, are marked for the vengeance of eternal fire. See *Jude 7.*

(2.) They were not ashamed to own it, and to prosecute their design by force and arms. The thing had been ill enough, if it had been carried on by intrigue and wheedling, but they proclaim war with virtue, and bid open defiance to it. Hence daring sinners are said to *declare their sin as Sodom*, *Isa. iii. 9.* Note, Those that are become impudent in sin, generally prove impenitent in sin, and it will be their ruin. Those have hard hearts indeed that sin with a high hand, *Jer. vi. 15.*

(3.) When Lot interposed, with all the mildness imaginable, to check the rage and fury of their lust, they were most insolently rude and abusive to him. He ventured himself among them, ver. 6. He spoke them fair, and called them brethren, ver. 7. begged of them not to do so wickedly; and being greatly disturbed at their vile attempt, unadvisedly and unjustifiably offered to prostitute his two daughters to them, ver. 8. It is true, of two evils we must chuse the less, but of two sins we chuse neither, nor ever do evil that good may come of it. He reasoned with them, pleaded the laws of hospitality, and the protection of his house which his guests were intitled to; but you had as good offer reason to a roaring lion and a ranging bear, as to these head-strong sinners who were governed only by lust and passion. Lot's arguing with them doth but exasperate them, and to compleat their wickedness, and fill up the measure of it, they fall foul upon him. (1.) They ridicule him, charge him with the absurdity of pretending to be a magistrate, when he was not so much as a free-man of their city, ver. 9. Note, It is common for reprovers to be unjustly upbraided as usurpers; and for offering the kindness of a friend to be charged with assuming the authority of a judge: as if a man might not speak reason, without taking too much upon him. (2.) They threaten him, and lay violent hands upon him, and the good man is in danger of being pulled in pieces by this outrageous rabble. Note, 1. Those that hate to be reformed hate those that reprove them, tho' with never so much tenderness. Presumptuous sinners do by their consciences as the Sodomites did by Lot, baffle their checks, stifle their convictions, press hard upon them till they have scared them, and quite stopped their mouths, and so made themselves ripe for ruin. 2. Abuses offered to God's messengers, and to faithful reprovers soon fill the measure of a people's wickedness, and bring destruction without remedy. See *Prov. xxix. 1.* and *2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.* If reproofs remedy not, there is no remedy. See *2 Chron. xxv. 16.*

3. That nothing less than the power of an angel could save a good man out of their wicked hands. It was now past dispute what Sodom's character was, and what course must be taken with it; and therefore the angels immediately give a specimen of what they further intended.

1. They rescue Lot, ver. 10. Note, 1. He that watereth shall be watered also himself. Lot was solicitous to protect them, and now they take effectual care for his safety, in return of his kindness. 2. Angels are employed for the special preservation of those that expose themselves to danger by well doing. The saints at death are pulled like Lot into a house of perfect safety, and the door shut for ever against those that pursue them.

2. They chastise the insolence of the Sodomites, ver. 11. they smote them with blindness. This was designed, 1. To put an end to their attempt, and disable them to pursue it. Justly were they struck blind that had been deaf to reason. Violent persecutors are oft infatuated, so that they cannot push on their malicious designs against God's messengers, *Job v. 14, 15.* Yet these Sodomites after they were struck blind continued seeking the door to break



break it down till they were tired. No judgments of themselves will change the corrupt natures and wills of wicked men. If their minds had not been blinded as well as their bodies they would have said as the magicians, this is the finger of God, and would have submitted. 2. It was to be an earnest of their utter ruin the next day. When God in a way of righteous judgment blinds men, their condition is already desperate, *Rom. xi. 8, 9.*

12. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. 13. For we will destroy this place: because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. 14. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get ye out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city: but he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

We have here the preparation for Lot's deliverance.

1. Notice is given him of the approach of Sodom's ruin, *ver. 13. we will destroy this place.* Note, The holy angels are ministers of God's wrath for the destruction of sinners, as well as of his mercy for the preservation and deliverance of his people. In this sense the good angels become *evil angels*, *Psal. lxxviii. 49.*

2. He is directed to give notice to his friends and relations, that they, if they would, might be saved with him, *ver. 12. Hast thou here any besides* that thou art concerned for, if thou hast, go tell them what is coming. Now this implies, 1. The command of a great duty, which was to do all he could for the salvation of those about him, to snatch them as brands out of the fire. Note, Those who through grace are themselves delivered out of a sinful state and condition should do what they can for the deliverance of others, especially their relations. 2. The offer of great favour. They do not ask whether he knew any righteous ones in the city fit to be spared; no, they knew there were none, but they ask what relations he had there, and whether righteous or unrighteous they should be saved with him. Note, Bad people often fare the better in this world for the sake of their good relations. It is good being a-kin to a godly man.

3. He applies himself accordingly to his sons in law, *ver. 14. Observe, 1. The fair warning that Lot gave them. Up, get you out of this place.* The manner of expression is startling and quickening. It was no time to trifle, when the destruction was just at the door. They had not forty days to turn them in, as the Ninevites had. Now or never they must make their escape. At midnight this cry was made. Such as this is our call to the unconverted to turn and live.

2. The slight they put upon this warning, *he seemed to them as one that mocked.* They thought perhaps, that the assault which the Sodomites had just now made upon his house had disturbed his head, and put him into such a fright that he knew not what he said; or, they thought he was not in earnest with them. They that lived a merry life, and made a jest of every thing, made a jest of that, and so they perished in the overthrow. Thus many who are warned of the misery and danger they are in by sin, make a light matter of it, and think their ministers do but jest with them; such will perish with their blood upon their own heads.

15. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. 16. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. 17. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. 18. And Lot said unto them, O not so, my Lord. 19. Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life: and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die. 20. Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: O let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. 21. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. 22. Hasten thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

Here is, 1. The rescue of Lot out of Sodom. Tho' there were not ten righteous men in Sodom, for whose sakes it might be spared, yet that one righteous man that was among them delivered his own soul, *Ezek. xiv. 14.* Early in the morning his own guests in kindness to him turned him out of doors, and his family with him, *ver. 15.* His daughters that were married, perished with their unbelieving husbands, but those that continued with him were preserved with him. Observe,

(1.) With what a gracious violence Lot was brought out of Sodom, *ver. 16.* It seems, though he did not make a jest of the warning given as his sons in law did, yet he lingered, he trifled, he did not make so much haste as the case required. Thus many that are under some convictions about the misery of their spiritual state, and the necessity of a change, yet defer that needful work, and foolishly linger. Lot did so, and it might have been fatal to him, if the angels had not *laid hold on his hand, and brought him forth, and saved him with fear*, *Jude 23.* Herein it is said, *the Lord was merciful to him*, otherwise he might justly have left him to perish, since he was so loth to depart. Note, 1. The salvation of the most righteous men must be attributed to God's mercy, not to their own merit. We are saved by grace. 2. God's power also must be acknowledged in the bringing of souls out of a sinful state. If God had not brought us forth we had never come forth. 3. If God had not been merciful to us our lingering had been our ruin.

(2.) With what a gracious vehemence: he was urged to make the best of his way, when he was *brought forth*, *ver. 17.*

1. He must still apprehend himself in danger of being consumed, and be quickened by the law of self-preservation to flee for his life. Note, There is a holy fear and trembling, which is necessary to the working out of our salvation.

2. He must therefore mind his business with the utmost care and diligence. He must not hanker after Sodom, look not behind thee; he must not loiter by the way, stay not in all the plain, for it would all be made one dead sea; he must not take up short of the place of refuge appointed him, escape to the mountain. Such as these are the commands given to those who through grace are delivered out of a sinful state and condition. (1.) Return not to sin and Satan, for that is looking back to Sodom. (2.) Rest not in self and the world, for that is staying in the plain. And (3.) Reach towards Christ and Heaven, for that is escaping to the mountain, short of which we must not take up.

2. The fixing of a place of refuge for him. The mountain was first appointed for him to flee to, but

1. He begged for a city of refuge, one of the five that lay together, called Bela, *chap. xiv. 2. ver. 18, 19, 20.* It was Lot's weakness to think a city of his own choosing safer than the mountain of God's appointing. And he argued against himself, when he pleaded, *thou hast magnified thy mercy in saving my life, and I cannot escape to the mountain*; for could not he that had plucked him out of Sodom when he lingered, carry him safe to the mountain, though he began to tire? Could not he that had saved him from greater evils save him from the lesser? He insists much in his petition upon the smallness of the place: It is a little one, is it not? Therefore, it was to be hoped, not so bad as the rest. This gave a new name to the place, it was called Zoar, a little one. Intercessions for little ones are worthy to be remembered.

2. God granted him his request, though there was much infirmity in it, *ver. 21, 22.* See what favour God shewed to a true faint, though weak. 1. Zoar was spared to gratify him. Tho' his intercession for it was not as Abraham's for Sodom from a principle of generous charity, but purely from self-interest, yet God granted him his request, to shew how much the fervent prayer of a righteous man avails. 2. Sodom's ruin was suspended till he was safe. *I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither.* Note, The very presence of good men in a place helps to keep off judgments. See what care God takes for the preservation of his people. The winds are held till God's servants are sealed, *Rev. vii. 3. Ezek. ix. 4.*

Lastly, It is taken notice of, that the sun was risen when Lot entered into Zoar. For when a good man comes into a place he brings light along with him, or should do.

24. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven. 25. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

Then when Lot was got safe into Zoar, then this ruin came, for good men are taken away from the evil to come. Then when the sun was risen bright and clear, promising a fair day, then this storm arose, to shew that it was not from natural causes. Concerning this destruction observe, (1.) That God was the immediate author of it. It was destruction from the Almighty. The Lord rained, — from the Lord, *ver. 24. i. e.* God from himself, by his own immediate power, and not in the common course of nature. Or, God the Son from God the Father, for the Father has committed all judgment to the Son. Note, He that



that is the Saviour will be the destroyer of those that reject the salvation.

(2.) That it was a strange punishment, *Job xxxi. 3.* never was the like before nor since. Hell was rained from Heaven upon them. *Fire and brimstone and a horrible tempest, this was the portion of their cup, Psal. xi. 6.* not a flash of lightening, which is destructive enough when God gives it commission, but a shower of lightening. Brimstone was scattered upon their habitation, *Job xviii. 15.* and then the fire soon fastened upon them. God could have drowned them as he did the old world; but he would shew that he has many arrows in his quiver, fire as well as water.

(3.) That it was a judgment that laid all waste, it overthrew the cities, and destroyed all the inhabitants of them, the plain, and all that grew upon the ground, *ver. 25.* It was an utter ruin, and irreparable; that fruitful valley remains to this day a great lake, or dead sea, it is called the salt sea, *Num. xxxiv. 12.* Travellers say it is about thirty miles long, and ten miles broad. It has no living creature in it. It is not moved by the wind: the smell of it is offensive: things do not easily sink in it. The Greeks call it Asphaltis, from a sort of pitch which it casts up. Jordan falls into it, and is lost there.

(4.) That it was a punishment that answered their sin. Burning lusts against nature were justly punished with this preternatural burning. They that went after strange flesh were destroyed by strange fire, *Jude 7.* They persecuted the angels with their rabble, and made Lot afraid, and now God persecuted them with his tempest, and made them afraid with his storm, *Psal. lxxxiii. 15.*

(5.) That it was designed for a standing revelation of the wrath of God against sin and sinners in all ages: it is accordingly oft referred to in the scripture, and made a pattern of the ruin of Israel, *Deut. xxix. 23.* of Babylon, *Isa. xlii. 14.* of Edom, *Jer. xlix. 18.* of Moab and Ammon, *Zeph. ii. 9.* Nay, it was typical of the vengeance of eternal fire, *Jude 7.* and the ruin of all that live ungodly; *2 Pet. ii. 6.* especially that despise the gospel, *Matth. x. 15.* It is in allusion to this destruction that the place of the damned is oft represented by a lake that burns as Sodom did with fire and brimstone. Let us learn from it, 1. The evil of sin, and the hurtful nature of it. Iniquity tends to ruin. 2. The terrors of the Lord. See what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God.

26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

This also is written for our admonition, our Saviour refers to it, *Luk. xvii. 32.* Remember Lot's wife. As by the example of Sodom the wicked are warned to turn from their wickedness, so by the example of Lot's wife, the righteous are warned not to turn from their righteousness. See *Ezek. iii. 18, 20.* We have here.

1. The sin of Lot's wife: *she looked back from behind him.* This seemed a small thing, but we are sure by the punishment of it, that it was a great sin, and exceeding sinful.

(1.) She disobeyed an express command, and so sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression which ruined us all.

(2.) Unbelief was at the bottom of it, she questioned whether Sodom would be destroyed, and thought she might still have been safe in it.

(3.) She looked back upon her neighbours she had left behind with more concern than was fit, now their day of grace was over, and divine justice was glorifying itself in their ruin. See *Isa. lxvi. 24.*

(4.) Probably she hankered after her house and goods in Sodom, and was loth to leave them. Christ intimates this to be her sin, *Luk. xvii. 31, 32.* she too much regarded her stuff.

(5.) Her looking back spoke an inclination to go back, and therefore our Saviour uses it as a warning against apostacy from our Christian profession. We have all renounced the world and the flesh, and have set our faces heaven-wards; we are in the plain, upon our probation; and it is at our peril if we return into the interests we profess to have abandoned. Drawing back is to perdition, and looking back is towards it. *Let us therefore fear,* *Heb. iv. 1.*

2. The punishment of Lot's wife for this sin. She was struck dead in the place, yet her body did not fall down, but stood fixed and erect like a pillar, or monument, nor liable to waste or decay; as human bodies exposed to the air are, but metamorphosed into a metallic substance which would last perpetually. Come behold the goodness and severity of God, *Rom. xi. 22.* towards Lot that went forwards, goodness; towards his wife that looked back, severity. Though she was nearly related to a righteous man, though better than her neighbours, and though a monument of distinguishing mercy in her deliverance out of Sodom, yet God did not connive at her disobedience. For great privileges will not secure us from the wrath of God if we do not carefully and faithfully improve them. This pillar of salt should season us. Since it is such a dangerous thing to look back let us always press forwards, *Phil. iii. 13, 14.*

27. And Abraham gat up early in the morning, to the place where he stood before the LORD. 28. And

he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke a furnace. 29. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities, in the which Lot dwelt.

Our communion with God consists in our gracious regard to him, and his gracious regard to us: we have here therefore the communion that was between God and Abraham, the event concerning Sodom, as before in the consultation concerning it; for communion with God is to be kept up in providences as well as in ordinances.

1. Here is Abraham's pious regard to God in this event: In two things; 1. A careful expectation of the event, *ver. 27:* he gat up early to look towards Sodom, and to intimate, that his design herein was to see what became of his prayers, he went to the very place where he had stood before the Lord, and set himself there, as upon his watch-tower, *Hab. ii. 1.* Note, When we have prayed, we must look after our prayers, and observe the success of them, we must direct our prayer as a letter, and then look up for an answer: direct our prayer as an arrow, and then look up to see whether it reach the mark, *Psal. v. iii.* Our enquiries after news must be in expectation of an answer to our prayers.

2. An awful observation of it: He looked toward Sodom; (*ver. 28.*) not as Lot's wife did, tacitly reflecting upon the divine severity, but humbly adoring it, and acquiescing in it. Thus the saints, when they see the smoke of Babylon's torment rising up for ever (like Sodom's here) will say again and again, Alleluja; *Rev. xix. 3.* Those that have most earnestly interceded for sinners in the day of grace will, in the day of judgment, be content to see them perish, and glorify God in it. 2. Here is God's favourable regard to Abraham, *ver. 29.* As before, when Abraham prayed for Ishmael, God heard him for Isaac; so now when he prayed for Sodom, he heard him for Lot. He remembered Abraham, and for his sake, sent Lot out of the overthrow: Note, 1. God will certainly give an answer of peace to the prayer of faith in his own way and time; though for a while it seem to be forgotten, yet sooner or later it will appear to be remembered. 2. That the relations and friends of godly people fare the better for their interest in God, and intercessions with him: it was out of respect to Abraham that Lot was rescued; perhaps this word encouraged Moses long after to pray, *Exod. xxxii. 13.* Lord remember Abraham; and see *Isa. lxiii. 11.*

30. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain; and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. 31. And the first-born said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. 32. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 33. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. 34. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 35. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. 36. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. 37. And the first born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. 38. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

Here is, 1. The great trouble and distress that Lot was brought into after his deliverance, *ver. 30.* (1.) He was frightened out of Zoar, durst not dwell there; either because he was conscious to himself that it was a refuge of his own chusing, and that therein he had foolishly prescribed to God, and therefore he could not but distrust his safety in it: or, because he found it as wicked as Sodom; and therefore concluded it could not long survive it; or, perhaps he observed the rise and increase of those waters, which, after the conflagration, perhaps from Jordan, began to overflow the plain; and which mixing with the ruins, by degrees made the dead sea; in those waters he concluded Zoar must needs perish (though it had escaped the fire) because it stood upon the same flat. Note, Settlements and shelters of our own chusing, and in which we do not follow God, commonly prove uneasy to us. (2.) He was forced to betake himself to the mountain, and to take



up with a cave for his habitation there. Methinks it was strange he did not return to Abraham, and put himself under his protection, to whom he had once and again owed his safety: but the truth is, there are some good men that are not wise enough to know what is best for themselves. Observe, (1.) He was now glad to go to the mountain, the place which God had appointed for his shelter. Note, It is well if disappointment in our way drive us at last to God's way. (2.) He that a while ago could not find room enough for himself and his stock in the whole land, but must juggle with Abraham, and get as far from him as he could, is now confined to a hole in a hill, where he has scarce room to turn him, and there he is solitary and trembling. Note, It is just with God to reduce those to poverty and restraint who have abused their liberty and plenty. See also in Lot what those bring themselves to at last, that forsake the communion of saints for secular advantages: they will be beaten with their own rod.

2. The great sin that Lot and his daughters were guilty of, when they were in this desolate place. It is a sad story,

1. His daughters laid a very wicked plot to bring him to sin; and theirs was doubtless the greater guilt. They contrived, under pretence of cheering up the spirits of their father in his present condition, to make him drunk, and then lie with him, *ver. 31, 32.* (1.) Some think their pretence was plausible; their father had no sons, they had no husbands, nor knew they where to have any of the holy seed, or, if they had children by others, their father's name would not be preserved in them; some think they had the Messiah in their eye, who they hoped might descend from their father, for he came from Terah's elder son, was separated from the rest of Shem's posterity, as well as Abraham, and was now signally delivered out of Sodom. Their mother, and the rest of the family were gone, they might not marry with the cursed Canaanites, and therefore they supposed that the end they aimed at, and the extremity they were brought to, would excuse the irregularity: Thus the learned Monsieur Allix. Note, Good intentions are often abused to patronize ill actions. But, (2.) Whatever their pretence was, it is certain their project was very wicked and vile, and an impudent affront to the very light and law of nature. Note, 1. The sight of God's most tremendous judgments upon sinners, will not, of itself, without the grace of God, restrain evil hearts from evil practices: one would wonder how the fire of lust could possibly kindle upon them who had so lately been the eye-witnesses of Sodom's flames. 2. Solitude has its temptations as well as company, and particularly to uncleanness. When Joseph was alone with his mistress, he was in danger. *Gen. xxxix. 11.* Relations that dwell together, especially if solitary, have need carefully to watch even against the least evil thought of this kind, lest satan get an advantage.

2. Lot himself, by his own folly and unwariness, was wretchedly overcome, and suffered himself so far to be imposed upon by his own children, as two nights together to be drunk, and to commit incest, *ver. 33, &c.* Lord, what is man? What are the best of men when God leaves them to themselves? See here, 1. The peril of security: Lot, that not only kept himself sober and chaste in Sodom, but was a constant mourner for the wickedness of the place, and a witness against it, yet in the mountain, where he was alone, and as he thought, quite out of the way of temptation, he is thus shamefully overtaken: let him therefore that thinks he stands, stand high, and stand firm, *take heed lest he fall*: No mountain on this side the holy hill above can set us out of the reach of satan's fiery darts. 2. The peril of drunkenness; it is not only a great sin itself, but it is the inlet of many sins; it may prove the inlet of the worst and most unnatural sins, which may be a perpetual wound and dishonour: Excellently doth Mr Herbert describe it, 'He that is drunken may his mother kill, big with his sister, &c.' A man may do that without reluctance when he is drunk, which, when he is sober he could not think of without horror. 3. The peril of temptation, from our dearest relations and friends, whom we love and esteem, and expect kindness from. Lot, whose temperance and chastity were impregnable against the batteries of foreign force was surprized into sin and shame, by the base treachery of his own daughters; we must dread a snare wherever we are, and be always upon our guard.

In the close we have an account of the birth of the two sons, or grandsons, (call them which you will) of Lot, Moab, and Ammon, the fathers of two nations, neighbours to Israel, and which we often read of in the Old Testament, both together are called the children of Lot, *Psal. lxxxiii. 8.* Note, Tho' prosperous births may attend incestuous conceptions, yet they are so far from justifying them, that they rather perpetuate the reproach of them, and entail infamy upon posterity; yet the tribe of Judah, of which our Lord sprang, descended from such a birth, and Ruth, a Moabitess, has a name in his genealogy, *Matth. i. 3, 5.*

Lastly, Observe that after this we never read any more of Lot, nor what came of him: no doubt he repented of his sin, and was pardoned, but from the silence of the scripture concerning him, from henceforward we may learn, that drunkenness, as it makes men forgetful, so it makes them forgotten, and many a name, which otherwise might have been remembered with respect, is buried by it in contempt and oblivion.

## C H A P. XX.

*We are here returning to the story of Abraham, yet that part of it which is here recorded, is not to his honour. The fairest marbles have their flaws, and while there are spots in the moon, we must not expect any thing spotless under it: And the scripture is impartial in relating the blemishes even of its most celebrated heroes. We have here, 1. Abraham's sin in denying his wife, and Abimelech's sin thereupon in taking her, ver. 1, 2. 2. God's discourse with Abimelech in a dream, upon this occasion, wherein he shews him his error, ver. 3. Accepts of his plea, ver. 4, 5, 6. and directs him to make restitution, ver. 7. 3. Abimelech's discourse with Abraham, wherein he chides him for the cheat he had put upon him, ver. 8, 9, 10. and Abraham excuses it as well as he can, ver. 11, 12, 13. 4. The good issue of the story, in which Abimelech restores Abraham his wife, ver. 14, 15, 16. and Abraham, by prayer, prevails with God for the removal of the judgment Abimelech was under, ver. 17, 18.*

1. **A**ND Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. 2. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

Here 1. is Abraham's remove from Mamre, where he had lived near 20 years into the country of the Philistines, *ver. 1.* he sojourned in Gerar. We are not told upon what occasion he removed, whether terrified by the destruction of Sodom, or because the country round was, for the present, prejudiced by it, or, as some of the Jewish writers say, because he was grieved at Lot's incest with his daughters, and the reproach which the Canaanites cast upon him and his religion, for his kinsman's sake; doubtless there was some good cause for his removal. Note, 1. In a world where we are strangers and pilgrims, we cannot expect to be always in the same place. 2. Where-ever we are we must look upon ourselves but as sojourners.

2. His sin in denying his wife; as before chap. 12, 13. which was not only in itself such an equivocation as bordered upon a lye, and which, if admitted as lawful, would be the ruin of human converse, and an inlet into all falsehood; but was also an exposing of the chastity and honour of his wife, which he ought to be the protector of. But besides this, it had here a twofold aggravation, 1. That he had been guilty of this same sin before, and had been reprov'd for it, and convinced of the folly of the suggestion, which induced him to it, yet he returns to it. Note, It is possible that a good man may not only fall into sin, but relapse into the same sin, through the surprise and strength of temptation, and the infirmity of the flesh: Let backsliders repent then, but not despair, *Jer. iii. 22.* 2. That Sarah, as it should seem, was now with child of the promised seed, or at least in expectation of being so quickly, according to the word of God; he ought therefore to have taken a particular care of her now, as *Judg. xiii. 4.*

3. The peril that Sarah was brought into by this means: *The king of Gerar sent and took her* to his house, in order to the taking her to his bed. Note, The sin of one often occasions the sin of others; he that breaks the hedge of God's commandments opens a gap to he knows not how many; the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water.

3. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken: for she is a man's wife. 4. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, LORD, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? 5. Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, he is my brother: in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this. 6. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. 7. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou, that thou shalt surely die, and all that are thine.

It appears by this that God revealed himself by dreams, which evidenced themselves to be divine and supernatural, not only to his servants the prophets, but even to those that were out of the pale of the church and covenant; but then usually it was with some regard to God's own people, as in Pharaoh's dream to Joseph, in Nebuchadnezzar's to Daniel, and here in Abimelech's to Abraham and Sarah, for he reprov'd this king for their sake *Psal. cv. 14, 15.*

1. God gives him notice of his danger, *ver. 3.* His danger of sin, telling him, that the woman was a man's wife, so that if he take her he wrongs her husband; his danger of death for this sin.



fin, *Thou art a dead man*, and God's saying so of a man makes him so. Note, every willful sinner ought to be told that he is a dead man. As the condemned malefactor, and the patient whose disease is mortal, is said to be so: if thou art an ill man, certainly thou art a dead man.

2. He pleads ignorance, *ver. 4; 5*. That Abraham and Sarah had agreed to impose upon him, and not to let him know that they were any more, *but brother and sister*: See what confidence a man may have towards God, when his heart *condemns him not*, 1 Joh. iii. 21. If our consciences witness to our integrity, and that however we have been cheated into a snare, we have not knowingly and wittingly sinned against God, it will be our *rejoicing in the day of evil*. He pleads with God as Abraham had done, *chap. xviii. 23*. *Wilt thou slay a righteous nation?* Not such a nation as Sodom which was indeed justly destroyed, but in this matter innocent.

3. God gives a very full answer to what he had said.

1. He allows his plea, and admits that what he did, he did in the integrity of his heart, *ver. 6. yea I know it*. Note, It is matter of comfort to those that are honest, that God knows their honesty, and will acknowledge it, tho' perhaps men that are prejudiced against them either cannot be convinced of it, or will not own that they are.

2. He lets him know that he was kept from proceeding in the sin, purely by the good hand of God upon him. *I withheld thee from sinning against me*; Abimelech was hereby kept from doing wrong, Abraham from suffering wrong, and Sarah from both. Note, (1.) There is a great deal of sin devised and designed that is never executed. As bad as things are in the world, they are not so bad as the devil and wicked men would have them. (2.) It is God that restrains men from doing the ill they would do; it is not from him that there is sin, but it is from him that there is not more sin, either by his influence on mens minds, checking their inclination to sin or by his providence taking away the opportunity to sin. (3.) It is a great mercy to be hindered from committing sin, and which God must have the glory of, whoever is the instrument, 1 Sam. xxv. 32.

3. He chargeth him to make restitution, *ver. 7. Now therefore, now thou art better informed, restore the man his wife*. Note, Ignorance will excuse no longer than it continues: if we ignorantly did wrong, that will not excuse us if we knowingly persist in it, *Lev. v. 3, 4*. The reasons why he must be just and kind to Abraham, are, 1. Because he is a prophet, near and dear to God, for whom God doth in a particular manner concern himself: God highly resents the injuries done to his prophets, and takes them as done to himself. 2. Being a prophet, he shall pray for thee: That is a prophet's reward, and a good reward it is: It is intimated, that there was a great efficacy in the prayers of a prophet; and that good men should be ready to help those with their prayers that stand in need of them, and should make at least this return for the kindnesses that are done them: Abraham was necessary to Abimelech's trouble, and therefore was obliged in justice to pray for him. 3. It is at thy peril if thou do not restore her, *know thou that thou shalt surely die*. Note, He that doth wrong whoever he is, prince or peasant, shall certainly receive for the wrong which he has done, unless he repent and make restitution, *Col. iii. 25*. No injustice can be made passable with God, no not by Cæsar's image stamped upon it.

8. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. 9. Then Abimelech called Abraham and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us, and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not be done. 10. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? 11. And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. 12. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and she became my wife. 13. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; At every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother.

Abimelech being thus warned of God in a dream, takes the warning, and as one truly afraid of sin and its consequences, he rises early to pursue the directions given him.

1. He has a caution for his servants, *ver. 8*. Abraham himself could not be more careful than he was, to command his household in this matter. Note, Those whom God hath convinced of sin and danger, ought to tell others what God hath done for their soul, that they also may be awakened, and brought to a like holy fear.

2. He has a chiding for Abraham. Observe,

1. The serious reproof which Abimelech gave to Abraham, *ver. 9, 10*. His reasoning with Abraham upon this occasion was

very strong and yet very mild. Nothing could be said better; he doth not reproach him, nor insult over him, doth not say, is this your profession? I see tho' you will not swear you will lie; if these be prophets I'll bless me from them: But he fairly represents the injury Abraham had done him, and calmly signifies his resentment of it. 1. He calls that sin which he now found he had been in danger of a great sin. Note, Even the light of nature teaches men, that the sin of adultery is a very great sin: be it observed to the shame of many who call themselves Christian, and yet make a light matter of it. 2. He looks upon it that both himself, and his kingdom would have been exposed to the wrath of God, if he had been guilty of that sin, tho' ignorantly. Note, The sins of kings often prove the plagues of kingdoms, rulers should therefore, for their people's sakes, dread sin. 3. He charges Abraham with doing that which was not justifiable, in disowning his marriage; this he speaks of justly, and yet tenderly; he doth not call him a liar and cheat, but tells him he had done *deeds that ought not to be done*. Note, Equivocation and dissimulation; however they may be palliated, are very ill things, and by no means to be admitted in any case. 4. He takes it as a very great injury to himself and his family, that Abraham had thus exposed them to sin, *What have I offended thee?* If I had been thy worst enemy, thou couldest not have done me a worse turn, nor taken a more effectual course to be revenged on me. Note, We ought to reckon, that those do us the greatest diskindness in the world, that any ways tempt or expose us to sin, tho' they may pretend friendship, and offer that which is grateful enough to the corrupt nature. 5. He challenges them to assign a cause he had to suspect them as a dangerous people for an honest man to live among, *ver. 10. What sawest thou that thou hast done this thing?* What reason hadst thou to think that if we had known her to be thy wife, thou would have been exposed to any danger by it? Note, A suspicion of our goodness is justly reckoned a greater affront, than a slight upon our greatness.

2. The poor excuse that Abraham made for himself.

1. He pleaded the ill opinion he had of the place, *ver. 11*. He thought within himself tho' he could not give any good reason for his thinking so, *surely the fear of God is not in this place*, and then they will slay me. Note, 1. Little good is to be expected there where no fear of God is: See *Psal. xxxvi. 1*. 2. There are many places and persons that have more of the fear of God in them, than we think they have; perhaps they are not called by our dividing name, they do not wear our badges, they do not tie themselves to that which we have an opinion of, and therefore we conclude they have not the fear of God in their hearts, which is injurious both to Christ and Christians, and makes us obnoxious to God's judgment, *Matth. vii. 1*. 3. Uncharitableness and censoriousness is a sin that is the cause of many other sins. When men have once persuaded themselves concerning such and such, that have not the fear of God, they think that will justify them in the most unjust and unchristian practices towards them. Men would not do ill if they did not first think ill.

2. He excused it from the guilt of a downright lie, by making it out, that in a sense she was his sister, *ver. 12*. Some think she was Lot's own sister, who is called his brother Lot, *chap. xiv. 16*: though he was his nephew, so Sarah is called his sister. But they to whom he said, she is my sister, understood that she was so his sister, as not to be capable of being his wife, so that it was an equivocation with an intent to deceive.

3. He clears himself from the imputation of an affront designed to Abimelech in it, by alledging that it had been in practice before, according to an agreement between him and his wife, when they first became sojourners, *ver. 13. When God caused me to wander from my father's house*, then we settled this matter. Note, 1. God is to be acknowledged in all our wanderings. 2. Those that travel abroad, and converse much with strangers, as they have need of the wisdom of the serpent, so it is requisite that that be ever tempered with the innocency of the dove. It may, for ought I know, be suggested, that God denied to Abraham and Sarah the blessing of children so long, to punish them for this sinful compact they had made to deny one another: if they will not own their marriage, why should God own it? but we may suppose that after this reproof which Abimelech gave them, they agreed never to do so again, and then presently we read, *chap. xxi. 1, 2*, that Sarah conceived.

14. And Abimelech took sheep and oxen, and men servants and womens servants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. 15. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. 16. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved. 17. So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid servants; and they bare children. 18. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abrahams wife.



Here is, 1. The *Kindness of a prince* which Abimelech shewed to Abraham; see how unjust Abraham's jealousies were: he fancied if they knew that Sarah was his wife, they would kill him; but instead of that, when they did know, they were to kind him, frightened at least to be so by the divine rebukes they were under. (1.) He gives him his royal licence to dwell where he pleased in his country; courting his stay, because he saw that God was with him; *ver. 15.* (2.) He gives him his royal gifts, *ver. 14. Sheep and oxen*, and *ver. 16.* a thousand Shekels. This he gave when he restored Sarah, either, 1. By way of satisfaction for the wrong he had offered to do in taking her to his house; when the Philistines restored the Ark, being plagued for detaining it, they sent a present with it. The law appointed, that when restitution was made, something should be added to it, *Lev. vi. 5.* or, 2. To engage Abraham's prayers for him; not as if prayers should be bought and sold, but those, whose spiritual things we reap of, we should endeavour to be kind to, *1 Cor. ix. 11.* Note, It is our wisdom to get and keep an interest with those that have an interest in Heaven: and to make those our friends who are the friends of God. (3.) He gives to Sarah, good instruction, tells her that her husband (her brother he calls him, to upbraid her with calling him so) must be to her for a *covering of the eyes*, i. e. she must look at no other, nor desire to be looked at by any other. Note, Yoke-fellows must be to each other for a covering of the eyes. The marriage-covenant is a *covenant with the eyes*, like Job's *chap. xxxi. 1.*

2. The kindness of a prophet, which Abraham shewed to Abimelech, he *prayed for him*, *ver. 17, 18.* This honour God would put upon Abraham, that though Abimelech had restored Sarah, yet the judgment he was under should be removed upon the prayer of Abraham, and not before. Thus God healed Miriam when Moses, whom he had most affronted, prayed for her, *Numb. xii. 13.* and was reconciled to Job's friends, when Job, whom they had grieved, prayed for them, (*Job xlii. 8.*) and so did, as it were, give it under his hand, that he was reconciled to them. Note, The prayers of good men may be a kindness to great men, and ought to be valued.

## C H A P. XXI.

In this chapter we have, 1. Isaac, the child of promise, born into Abraham's family, *ver. 1—8.* 2. Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, cast out of it, *ver. 9—21.* 3. Abraham's league with his neighbour Abimelech, *ver. 22—32.* 4. His devotion to his God, *ver. 33, 34.*

1. **A**ND the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. 2. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. 4. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. 6. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. 7. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age. 8. And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.

Long looked for comes at last: The vision concerning the promised seed is for an appointed time, and now at the end it speaks and doth not lie; few under the Old Testament were brought into the world with such expectation as Isaac was, not for the sake of any great personal eminency to which he was to arrive, but because he was to be in this very thing a type of Christ, that seed which the holy God so long promised, and holy men so long expected. In this account of the first days of Isaac we may observe,

1. The fulfilling of God's promise in the conception and birth of Isaac, *ver. 1, 2.* Note, God's providences look best and brightest when they are compared with his word, and we observe how God in all acts as he has said, as he has spoken.

(1.) Isaac was born according to the promise. The Lord visited Sarah in mercy, as he had said. Note, no word of God shall fall to the ground, for he is faithful that has promised, and God's faithfulness is the stay and support of his people's faith. He was born *at the set time, of which God had spoken to him*, *ver. 2.* Note, God is always punctual to his time; though his promised mercies come not at the time that we set, they will certainly come at the time that he sets, and that is the best time.

(2.) He was born by virtue of the promise: *Sarah by faith received strength to conceive*, *Heb. xi. 11.* God therefore, by promise, gave that strength. It was not by the power of common providence, but by the power of a special promise that Isaac was born. A sentence of death was, as it were, passed upon the second causes, Abraham was old, and Sarah old, and both as good as

dead, and then the word of God took place. Note, True believers, by virtue of God's promises are enabled to do that which is above the power of human nature, for *by them they partake of a divine nature*, *2 Pet. i. 4.*

2. Abraham's obedience to God's precept concerning Isaac.

(1.) He named him, as God commanded him, *ver. 3.* God directed him to a name for a memorial, *Isaac, laughter*; and Abraham, whose office it was, gave him that name, though he might have designed him some other name of a more pompous signification. Note, It is fit the luxuriancy of human invention should always truckle to the sovereignty and plainness of divine institution, yet there was good reason for the name, 1. When Abraham received the promise of him he laughed for joy, *chap. xvii. 17.* Note, When the sun of comfort is risen upon the soul, it is good to remember how welcome the dawning of the day was, and with what exultation, we embraced the promise. 2. When Sarah received the promise she laughed with distrust and diffidence. Note, When God gives us the mercies we began to despair of, we ought to remember with sorrow and shame our sinful distrusts of God's power and promise, when we were in pursuit of it. 3. Isaac was himself afterwards laughed at by Ishmael, *ver. 9.* and perhaps his name bid him expect it. Note, God's favourites are of the world's laughing-stocks. 4. The promise which he was not only the son, but the heir of, was to be the joy of all the saints in all ages, and that which would fill their mouths with laughter.

(2.) He circumcised him, *ver. 4.* The covenant being established with him, the seal of the covenant was administered to him, and though a bloody ordinance, and he a darling, yet it must not be omitted; no nor deferred beyond the eighth day. God had kept time in performing the promise, and therefore Abraham must keep time in obeying the precept.

3. The impressions which this mercy made upon Sarah. 1. It filled her with joy, *ver. 6. God has made Me to laugh*, he hath given me both cause to rejoice, and a heart to rejoice. Thus the mother of our Lord, *Luke i. 46.* Note, (1.) God bestows mercies upon his people to encourage their joy in his work and service. And whatever is the matter of our joy, God must be acknowledged as the author of it, unless it be the *laughter of the fool*. (2.) When mercies have been long deferred, they are the more welcome when they come. (3.) It adds to the comfort of any mercy to have our friends *rejoice with us* in it: See *Luke i. 58. They that hear will laugh with me*, for laughing is catching. Others would rejoice in this instance of God's power and goodness, and be encouraged to trust in him: See *Psal. cxix. 74.*

2. It filled her with wonder, *ver. 7.* Observe here,

(1.) What it was she thought so wonderful, that *Sarah should give children suck*, that she should not only bear a child, but be so strong and hearty at that age as to give it suck. Note, Mothers, if they be able, ought to be nurses to their own children: Sarah was a person of quality, was aged, nursing might be thought prejudicial either to herself, or to the child, or to both, she had choice of nurses no doubt in her own family, and yet she should do her duty in this matter, and her daughters the good wives are, while they thus *do well*, *1 Pet. iii. 5, 6.* See *Lam. iv. 3.*

(2.) How she expressed her wonder, *Who would have said it?* The thing was so highly improbable, so near to impossible, that, if any one but God had said it, we could not have believed them. Note, God's favours to his covenant-people are such as surpass both their own and others thoughts and expectations; who could imagine that God should do so much for those that deserve so little, nay, for those that deserve so ill? See *Eph. iii. 20.* *2 Sam. vii. 19.* Who would have said that God should send his son to dye for us, his spirit to sanctify us, his angels to attend us? Who would have said that such great sins should be pardoned, such mean services accepted, and such worthless worms taken into covenant and communion with the great and holy God.

4. A short account of Isaac's infancy, *ver. 8. The child grew*; special notice is taken of this, though a thing of course too intimate, that the children of the promise are growing children: See *Luke i. 80.* *ii. 40.* They that are born of God shall increase more and more with the increase of God, *Col. ii. 19.* He grew so as not always to *need milk*, but was able to *bear strong meat*, and then he *was weaned*: See *Heb. v. 13, 14.* And then it was that Abraham *made a great feast* for his friends and neighbours, in thankfulness to God for his mercy to him. He made this feast, not on the day that Isaac was born, that would have been too great a disturbance to Sarah, nor the day he was circumcised, that would have been too great a diversion from the ordinance, but the day he was weaned, because God's blessing upon the nursing of children, and the preservation of them through the perils of the infant age, is a signal instance of the care and tenderness of the divine providence, which ought to be acknowledged to its praise: See *Psal. xxii. 9, 10.* *Hos. xi. 1, 2.*

9. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. 10. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman, and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. 11. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his



his son. 12. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. 13. And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.

The casting out of Ishmael is here considered of and resolved on.

1. Ishmael himself gave the occasion by some affronts he gave to Isaac his little brother; some think on the day that Abraham made the feast for joy that Isaac was safely weaned, which the Jews say was not till he was three years old, others say five. Sarah herself was an eye-witness of the abuse, she *saw the son of the Egyptian, mocking*, ver. 9. mocking Isaac no doubt, for it is said with reference to this, *Gal. iv. 29. that he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit*. Ishmael is here called the *son of the Egyptian*, because (as some think) the four hundred years affliction of the seed of Abraham by the Egyptians began now, and was to be dated from hence, *chap. xv. 13*. She saw him playing with Isaac, so the Seventy; and in play mocking him. Ishmael was fourteen years elder than Isaac, and when children are together, the elder should be careful and tender of the younger, but it argued a very base and fordid disposition in Ishmael to be abusive to a child that was no way a match for him. Note, 1. God takes notice what children say, and do in their play, and will reckon with them, if they say or do amiss, though their parents do not. 2. That mocking is a great sin, and very provoking to God. 3. There is a rooted remaining enmity in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman. The children of promise must expect to be mocked. This is *persecution* which *they that will live godly* must count upon. 4. None are rejected and cast out from God but those who have first deserved it, Ishmael is continued in Abraham's family till he becomes a disturbance, grief, and scandal, to it.

2. Sarah made the motion, *ver. 10. Cast out the bond-woman*. This seems to be spoken in some heat, yet it is quoted, *Gal. iv. 30.* as if it had been spoken by a spirit of prophecy, and is the sentence passed on all hypocrites, and carnal people, though they have a place and name in the visible church; all that are born after the flesh, and not born again, that rest in the law, and reject the gospel-promise shall certainly be cast out. It is made to point particularly at the rejection of the unbelieving Jews, who, though they were the seed of Abraham, yet because they submitted not to the gospel-covenant, were unchurched and disfranchised. And that which above any thing provoked God to cast them off was their mocking and persecuting the gospel-church, God's Isaac, in it's infancy, 1 *Thes. ii. 16*. Note, There are many who are familiarly conversant with the children of God in this world, and yet shall not partake with them in the inheritance of sons. Ishmael might be Isaac's play-fellow and school-fellow, yet not his fellow-heir.

3. Abraham was averse to it, *ver. 11. The thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight*. (1.) It grieved him that Ishmael had given such a provocation. Note, Children ought to consider that the more their parents love them, the more they are grieved at their miscarriages, and particularly their quarrels among themselves. (2.) It grieved him that Sarah insisted upon such a punishment. Might it not suffice to correct him, would nothing less serve than to expel him? Note, Even the needful extremities which must be used with wicked and incorrigible children are very grievous to tender parents, who cannot thus afflict willingly.

4. God determined it, *ver. 12, 13*. We may well suppose Abraham to be in a mighty toss about this matter; loth to displease Sarah, and yet loth to expel Ishmael; in this difficulty God tells him what his will was, and then he is satisfied. Note, A good man desires no more in doubtful cases but to know his duty, and what God would have him do, and when he is clear in that, he is, or should be, easy. To make Abraham so, God sets this matter before him in a true light, and shews him, 1. That the casting out of Ishmael was necessary to the establishment of Isaac in the rights and privileges of the covenant. *In Isaac shall thy seed be called*; both Christ and the church must descend from Abraham through the lions of Isaac; this is the entail of the promise upon Isaac, and is quoted by the apostle (*Rom. ix. 7.*) to shew, that all who came from Abraham's loins were not the heirs of Abraham's covenant. Isaac the promised son must be the father of the promised seed, therefore, away with Ishmael, send him far enough lest he corrupt the manners, or attempt to invade the rights, of Isaac. It will be his security to have his rival banished. The covenant-seed of Abraham must be a peculiar people, a people by themselves, from the very first distinguished, not mingled with those that were out of covenant; for this reason Ishmael must be separated. Abraham was *called alone*, and so must Isaac be. See *Ija. li. 2*. It is likely Sarah little thought of this (*John xi. 51.*) but God took what she said, and turned it into an oracle, as afterwards, *Gen. xxvii. 10*. 2. That the casting out of Ishmael should not be his ruin, *ver. 13. he shall be a nation because he is thy seed*. We are not sure that it was his eternal ruin; it is presumption to say, that all those who are left out of the external dispensation of God's covenant are therefore excluded from all his

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mercies: those may be saved who are thus honoured. However, we are sure it was not his temporal ruin. Though he was chased out of the church, he was not *chased out of the world*. *I will make him a nation*. Note, (1.) Nations are of God's making: he founds them, he forms them, he fixes them. (2.) Many are full of the blessings of God's providence, that are strangers to the blessings of his covenant. (3.) The children of this world often fare the better as to outward things for their relation to the children of God.

14. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar (putting it on her shoulder) and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. 15. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. 16. And she went, and sat herself down over against him, a good way off, as it were a bow-shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. 17. And God heard the voice of the lad: and the angel of God called to Hagar out of Heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for I will make him a great nation. 19. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. 20. And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

Here is, 1. The casting out of the bond-woman and her son, from the family of Abraham, *ver. 14*. Abraham's obedience to the divine command in this matter was speedy, early in the morning, we may suppose immediately after he had in the night's visions received orders to do this. It was also submissive; it was contrary to his own judgment, at least to his own inclination to do it, yet as soon as he perceives it is the mind of God he makes no objections, but silently doth as he is bidden, as one trained up to an implicit obedience. In sending them away without any attendants on foot, and slenderly provided, for it is probable he observed the directions given him. If Hagar and Ishmael had carried themselves well in Abraham's family they might have continued there, but they threw themselves out by their own pride and insolence, which was thus justly chastised. Note, By abusing our privileges we forfeit them. Those that know not when they are well in such a desirable place as Abraham's family, deserve to be cashiered, and to be made to know the worth of mercies by the want of them.

2. Their wandering in the wilderness, missing their way to the place Abraham designed them for a settlement.

(1.) They were reduced to great distress there: their provisions were spent, Ishmael was sick; he that used to be full fed in Abraham's house, where he waxed fat and kicked, now fainted and sunk when he was brought to short allowance: Hagar is in tears, and sufficiently mortified; now she wishes for the crumbs she had wasted and made light of at her master's table: like one under the power of the spirit of bondage she despairs of relief, counts upon nothing but *the death of the child* (*ver. 15, 16.*) tho' God had told her before he was born, that he should live to be a man, a great man: we are apt to forget former promises when present providences seem to contradict them, for we live by sense.

(2.) In this distress God graciously appeared for their relief: he heard *the voice of the lad*, *ver. 17*. we read not of a word he said, but his sighs and groans, and calamitous state, cried loud in the ears of the God of mercy. An angel was sent to comfort Hagar, and it was not the first time that she had met with God's comforts in a wilderness, she had thankfully acknowledged the former kind visits which God made her in such a case, *chap. xvi. 13*. and therefore God now visited her again with seasonable succours. (1.) The angel assures her of the cognizance God took of her distress, *God has heard the voice of the lad where he is*, tho' he be in a wilderness; for wherever we are, there is a way open heaven-wards, therefore *lift up the lad, and hold him in thy hand*, *ver. 18*. Note, God's readiness to help us when we are in trouble, must not slacken but quicken our endeavours to help ourselves. (2.) He repeats the promise concerning her son, that he should be a great nation, as a reason why she should bestir herself to help him. Note, It should engage our care and pains about children and young people to consider, that we know not what God has designed them for, nor what great use providence may make of them. (3.) He directs her to a present supply, *ver. 19. he opened her eyes*, which were blubbered, and almost blinded with weeping, and then *she saw a well of water*. Note, Many that have reason enough to be comforted, go mourning from day to day, because they do not see the reason they have for comfort. There is a well of water by them in the covenant of grace, but they are not aware of it; they have



have not the benefit of it till the same God that opened their eyes to see their wound opens them to see their remedy, *John* xvi. 6, 7. Now the apostle tells us, that those things concerning Hagar and Ishmael are ἀλλήγορημένα, *Gal.* iv. 24. they are to be allegorized; this then will serve to illustrate the folly of those, (1.) Who sought for righteousness by the law, and the carnal ordinances of it, and not by the promise made in Christ, as the unbelieving Jews did, thereby running themselves into a wilderness of want and despair. Their comforts are soon exhausted, and, if God save them not by prerogative, and by a miracle of mercy open their eyes, and undeceive them, they are undone. (2.) Their folly also who seek for satisfaction and a happiness in the world, and the things of it. Those that forsake the comforts of the covenant and communion with God, and chuse their portion in this earth, take up with a bottle of water, poor and slender provision, and that soon spent; they wander endlessly in pursuit of satisfaction, and, at length, sit down short of it.

3. The settlement of Ishmael at last in the wilderness of Paran, *ver.* 20, 21. A wild place, fittest for a wild man, and such a one he was, *chap.* xvi. 12. They that are born after the flesh take up with the wilderness of this world, while the children of the promise aim at the heavenly Canaan, and cannot be at rest till they are there. Observe, 1. He had some tokens of God's presence, *God was with the lad*; his outward prosperity was owing to this. 2. By trade he was an archer, which intimates that craft was his excellency, and sport his business; rejected Esau was a cunning hunter, 3. He matched among his mother's relations; he took him a wife, out of Egypt: as great an archer as he was, he did not think he took his aim well in the business of his marriage, if he proceeded without his mother's advice and consent.

22. And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech, and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest. 23. Now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my sons son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. 24. And Abraham said, I will swear. 25. And Abraham reproved Abimelech, because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. 26. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it but to day. 27. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech: and both of them made a covenant. 28. And Abraham set seven ew-lambs of the flock by themselves. 29. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ew-lambs, which thou hast set by themselves? 30. And he said, For these seven ew-lambs shalt thou take off my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. 31. Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba: because there they swear both of them. 32. Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.

We have here an account of the treaty between Abimelech and Abraham, in which appears the accomplishment of that promise, *chap.* xii. 2. that God would make his name great. His friendship is valued, is courted, tho' a stranger, tho' a tenant at will to the Canaanites and Perizzites.

1. The league is proposed by Abimelech, and Phichol his prime minister of state, and general of his army.

(1.) The inducement to it was God's favour to Abraham, *ver.* 22. *God is with thee in all thou doest*, and we cannot but take notice of it. Note, 1. God in his providence sometimes shews his people such tokens for good, that their neighbours cannot but take notice of it, *Psal.* lxxxvi. 17. Their affairs do so visibly prosper, and they have such remarkable success in their undertakings, that a confession is extorted from all about them, of God's presence with them. 2. It is good being in favour with those that are in favour with God, and having an interest in them that have an interest in Heaven, *Zech.* viii. 23. *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* We do well for ourselves, if we have fellowship with those that have fellowship with God, *1 John* i. 3.

(2.) The tenor of it was in general, that there should be a firm and constant friendship between the two families, which should not, upon any account, be violated. This bond of friendship must be strengthened by the bond of an oath, in which the true God was appealed to, both as a witness of their sincerity, and an avenger, in case either side were treacherous, *ver.* 23. Observe, 1. He desires the entail of this league upon his posterity, and the extent of it to his people. He would have his son, and his sons son; and his land likewise to have the benefit of it. Good men

should secure an alliance and communion with the favourites of Heaven, not for themselves only, but for theirs also. 2. He minds Abraham of the fair treatment he had found among them, *according to the kindness I have done unto thee.* As those that have received kindness must return it, so those that have shewed kindness may expect it.

2. It is consented to by Abraham, with a particular clause inserted about a well: in Abraham's part of this transaction, Observe, 1. He was ready to enter into this league with Abimelech, finding him to be a man of honour and conscience, and that had the fear of God before his eyes, *ver.* 24. *I will swear.* Note, (1.) Religion doth not make men morose and unconversable, I am sure it ought not: we must not, under colour of shunning bad company be sower to all company, and jealous of every body. (2.) An honest mind doth not startle at assurances: if Abraham say he will be true to Abimelech, he is not afraid to swear it, an oath is for confirmation. 2. He prudently settled the matter concerning a well, which Abimelech's servants had quarrelled with Abraham about. Wells of water it seems were choice goods in that country; thanks be to God that they are not so scarce in ours. (1.) Abraham mildly told Abimelech of it, *ver.* 25. Note, If our brother trespass against us, we must with the meekness of wisdom tell him his fault, that the matter may be fairly accommodated, and an end made of it, *Matth.* xviii. 15. (2.) He acquiesced in Abimelech's justification of himself in this matter, *ver.* 26. *I wot not who has done this thing*; many are suspected of injustice and unkindness that are perfectly innocent, which we should be glad to be convinced of: the faults of servants must not be imputed to their masters unless they know of them, and justify them: and no more can be expected from an honest man than that he be ready to do right as soon as he knows that he hath done wrong. (3.) He took care to have his title to the well cleared and confirmed, to prevent any disputes or quarrels for the future, *ver.* 30. It is justice as well as wisdom to do thus, *in perpetuam rei memoriam.* 3. He made a very handsome present to Abimelech, *ver.* 27. It was not any thing curious or fine that he presented to him, but that which was valuable and useful, sheep and oxen, in gratitude for Abimelech's kindness to him, and in token of hearty friendship between them: interchanging of courtesies is the improving of love, that which is mine is my friend's. 4. He ratified the covenant by an oath, and registered it by giving a new name to the place, *ver.* 31. Beer-sheba, the well of the oath, in remembrance of the covenant they swore to, that they might be ever mindful of it: or, the well of seven, in remembrance of the seven lambs given to Abimelech, as a consideration for his confirming Abraham's title to that well. Note, Bargains made must be remembered, that we may make them good, and may not break our word thro' oversight.

33. And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. 34. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines land many days.

Observe, 1. Abraham being got into a good neighbourhood, knew when he was well, and continued a great while there: there he planted a grove for a shade to his tent, or, perhaps, an orchard of fruit-trees; and there, tho' we cannot say he settled, for God would have him while he lived to be a stranger and a pilgrim, yet he sojourned many days, as long as would consist with his character, as Abraham the Hebrew, or passenger.

2. There he made not only a constant practice, but an open profession of his religion, *There he called on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God*, probably in the grove he planted, which was his oratory, or house of prayer; Christ prayed in a garden, on a mountain. 1. Abraham kept up public worship, to which probably his neighbours resorted, and joined with him. Note, Good men should not only retain their goodness wherever they go, but do all they can to propagate it, and make others good. 2. In calling on the Lord we must eye him as *the everlasting God*, the God of the world; so some. Tho' God had made himself known to Abraham as his God in particular, and in covenant with him, yet he forgets not to give glory to him as the Lord of all: the everlasting God, who was before all worlds, and will be when time and days shall be no more: see *Isa.* xl. 28.

## CHAP. XXII.

We have here that famous story of Abraham's offering up his son Isaac, that is, his offering to offer him, which is justly looked upon as one of the wonders of the church. Here is, 1. The strange command which God gave to Abraham concerning it, *ver.* 1, 2. 2. Abraham's strange obedience to this command, *ver.* 3—10. 3. The strange issue of this trial. 1. The sacrificing of Isaac was countermanded, *ver.* 11, 12. 2. Another sacrifice was provided, *ver.* 13, 14. 3. The covenant was renewed with Abraham hereupon, *ver.* 15—19. Lastly, Account of some of Abraham's relations, *ver.* 20, ad fin.

1. **A**ND it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, Behold, here I am. 2. And he



he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I tell thee of.

Here is the trial of Abraham's faith, whether it continued so strong, so vigorous, so victorious, after a long settlement in communion with God, as it was at first, when by it he left his country: then it was made to appear that he loved God better than his father, now that he loved him better than his son. Observe here,

1. The time when Abraham was thus tried, ver. 1. *After these things*: after all the other exercises he had had, all the hardships and difficulties he had gone through; now perhaps he was beginning to think the storms were all blown over, but after all, this encounter comes, which is sharper than any yet. Note, Many former trials will not supersede nor secure us from further trials; we have not yet *put off the harness*, 1 Kings xx. 11. See *Psal.* xxx. 6, 7.

2. The author of the trial; God tempted him, not to draw him to sin, so Satan tempts; if Abraham had sacrificed Isaac he had not sinned, his orders would have justified him, and born him out; but, to discover his graces, how strong they were; that they might be *found to praise, and honour, and glory*, 1 Pet. i. 7. Thus God tempted Job, that he might appear not only a good man, but a great man. God did tempt Abraham; he did *lift up Abraham*, so some read it; as a scholar that improves well is lifted up, when he is put into a higher form. Note, strong faith is often exercised with strong trials, and put upon hard services.

3. The trial itself; God appeared to him as he had formerly done, called him by name, Abraham, that name which had been given him in ratification of the promise; Abraham, like a good servant, readily answered, *Here am I*; what faith my Lord unto his servant? Probably, he expected some renewed promise like those, *chap.* xv. 1. and xvii. 1. But to his great amazement, that which God has to say to him, is in short, Abraham, *Go, kill thy son*: and this command is given him in such aggravating language as makes the temptation abundantly more grievous; when God speaks, Abraham, no doubt, takes notice of every word, and listens attentively to it, and every word, here is *a sword in his bones*: the trial is steered with trying phrases: is it any pleasure to the Almighty that he should afflict? No, it is not, yet when Abraham's faith is to be tried, God seems to take pleasure in the aggravation of the trial, ver. 2. Observe,

1. The person to be offered. (1.) *Take thy son*, not thy bullocks and thy lambs, how willingly would Abraham have parted with them by thousands to redeem Isaac! No, *I will take no bullock out of thy house*, *Psal.* l. 10. I must have thy son: not thy servant, no, not the steward of thine house, that shall not serve the turn, I must have thy son. Jephtha, in pursuance of a vow, offered a daughter, but Abraham must offer his son, in whom the family was to be built up. Lord, let it be an adopted son, no, (2.) *Thine only son*; thine only son by Sarah. Ishmael was lately cast out, to the grief of Abraham, and now Isaac only was left, and must he go too? Yes, (3.) Take Isaac, him by name, thy laughter, that *son indeed*, *chap.* xvii. 19. not send for Ishmael back and offer him; no, it must be Isaac: but, Lord, I love Isaac, he is to me as my own soul; Ishmael is not, and wilt thou take Isaac also? All this is against me: Yea, (4.) That *son whom thou lovest*. The trial was of Abraham's love to God, and therefore it must be in a beloved son, and that string must be touched most upon: in the Hebrew it is expressed more emphatically; and, I think, might very well be read thus, *Take now that son of thine, that only one of thine, whom thou lovest, that Isaac*. God's command must over-rule all these considerations.

2. The place: in the land of Moriah, three days journey off: so that he might have time to consider it, and if he do it, must do it deliberately, that it might be a service the more reasonable, and the more honourable.

3. The manner, offer him *for a burnt-offering*; he must not only kill his son, but kill him as a sacrifice, kill him devoutly, kill him by rule, kill him with all that pomp and ceremony, with all that sedateness and composedness of mind with which he used to offer his burnt-offerings.

3. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4. Then on the third day Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 5. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide you here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. 6. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together. 7. And

Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? 8. And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together. 9. And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

We have here Abraham's obedience to this severe command: *Being tried, he offered up Isaac*, Heb. xi. 17. Observe,

1. The difficulties which he broke through in this act of obedience; much might have been objected against it. As, (1.) It seemed directly an antecedent law of God, which forbids murder under a severe penalty, *Gen.* ix. 5, 6. Now can the unchangeable God contradict himself? He that *hates robbery for burnt-offering*, *Isa.* lxi. 8. cannot delight in murder for it, (2.) How would it consist with natural affection to his own son? It would be not only murder, but the worst of murders: cannot Abraham be obedient, but he must be unnatural? If God insist upon a humane sacrifice, is there none but Isaac to be the offering? and none but Abraham to be the offerer? Must the father of the faithful be the monster of all fathers? (3.) God gave him no reason for it: When Ishmael was to be cast out, a just cause was assigned which satisfied Abraham, but here Isaac must die, and Abraham must kill him, and neither the one nor the other must know why, or wherefore: if Isaac had been to die a martyr for the truth, or his life had been the ransom of some other life more precious, it had been another matter: or if he had died as a criminal, a rebel against God or his parents, as in the case of the idolater, *Deut.* xiii. 8, 9. or the stubborn son, *Deut.* xxi. 18, 19. it might have passed as a sacrifice to justice; but the case is not so: he is a dutiful, obedient, hopeful, son; Lord, *what profit is there in his blood*? (4.) How would this consist with the promise? Was it not said, that in *Isaac shall thy seed be called*? But what comes of that seed if this pregnant bud be broke off so soon? (5.) How should he ever look Sarah in the face again? With what face can he return to her and his family with the blood of Isaac sprinkled on his garments, and staining all his raiment? *Surely a bloody husband hast thou been unto me*, would Sarah say, as *Exod.* iv. 25, 26. and it would be likely to alienate her affections for ever both from him and from his God. (6.) What would the Egyptians say, and the Canaanites, and Perizzites which dwelled then in the land? It would be an eternal reproach to Abraham, and to his altars: fair fall nature if this be grace. These and many the like objections might have been made, but he was infallibly assured that it was indeed a command of God, and not a delusion, and then that was sufficient to answer them all. Note, God's commands must not be disputed but obeyed; we must not consult *with flesh and blood* about them, *Gal.* i. 15, 16. but with a gracious obstinacy persist in our obedience to them.

2. The several steps of this obedience, all which help to magnify it, and to shew that he was guided by prudence, and governed by faith in the whole transaction.

1. He *riseth early*, ver. 3. Probably the command was given in the visions of the night, and early the next morning he set himself about the execution of it, did not delay, did not demur, did not take time to deliberate, for the command was peremptory, and would not admit a debate. Note, Those that do the will of God heartily will do it speedily; while we delay, time is lost, and the heart hardened.

2. He gets things ready for a sacrifice, and as if he himself had been a Gibeonite, it should seem with his own hands he *cleaves the wood for the burnt-offering*, that that might not be to seek when the sacrifice was to be offered; spiritual sacrifices must be thus prepared for.

3. It is very likely he said nothing of it to Sarah; this is a journey which she must know nothing of, lest she prevent it. There is so much in our own hearts to hinder our progress in duty, that we have need, as much as may be, to keep out of the way of other hindrances.

4. He carefully looked about him, to discover the place appointed for this sacrifice, which God had promised by some sign to direct him to. Probably the direction was given by an *appearance of the divine glory* in the place, some pillar of fire reaching from heaven to earth, visible at a distance, and to which he pointed when he said, ver. 5. we will go yonder, where you see the light, and worship.

5. He left his servants at some distance off, ver. 5. lest they should have interposed, and created him some disturbance in his strange oblation, for Isaac was, no doubt, the darling of the whole family. Thus when Christ was entering upon his agony in the garden, he took only three of his disciples with him, and left the rest at the garden door. Note, It is our wisdom and duty, when we are going to worship God, to lay aside all those thoughts and cares which may divert us from the service, leave them at the bottom of the hill that we may attend on the Lord without distraction.

6. He



6. He obliged Isaac to carry the wood, (both to try his obedience in a lesser matter first, and that he might typify Christ, who carried his own cross, *Joh. xix. 17.*) while he himself, tho' he knew what he did, with a steady and undaunted resolution carried the fatal knife and fire, *ver. 6.* Note, Those that through grace are resolved upon the substance of any service or suffering for God, must over-look the little circumstances which make it doubly difficult to flesh and blood.

7. Without any ruffle or disorder he talks it over with Isaac, as if it were but a common sacrifice he was going to offer, *ver. 7.*  
8. (1.) It was a very pretty question that Isaac asked him, as they were going together: *My father, saith Isaac, it was a melting word, which one would think should strike deeper in the breast of Abraham, than his knife could in the breast of Isaac.* He might have said, or thought at least, call me not thy father, who am now to be thy murderer: can a father be so barbarous, so perfectly lost to all the tenderness of a father? Yet he keeps his temper, and keep his countenance to admiration, calmly waits for his son's question, and this is it, *Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?* See how expert Isaac was in the law and custom of sacrifices. This it is to be well catechised: this is, 1. A trying question to Abraham, how could he endure to think that Isaac is himself the lamb; so it is, but Abraham, as yet, dare not tell him so: where God knows the faith to be armour of proof, he will laugh at *the trial of the innocent*, *Job ix. 23.* 2. It is a teaching question to us all, that when we are going to worship God, we should seriously consider whether we have every thing ready, especially the *Lamb for a burnt-offering*; behold the fire is ready, that is the spirit's assistance, and God's acceptance. The wood is ready, the instituted ordinances designed to kindle our affections, which indeed, without the spirit, are but like wood without fire, but the spirit works by them: *All things are now ready, but where is the lamb?* Where is the heart? Is that ready to be offered up to God, to ascend to him as a *burnt-offering*. (2.) It was a very prudent answer which Abraham gave him, *ver. 8. My son, God will provide himself a lamb.* This was the language, either, 1. of his obedience, we must offer the lamb, which God has appointed now to be offered; thus giving him this general rule of submission to the divine will, to prepare him for the application of it to himself very quickly. Or, 2. Of his faith; whether he meant it so or no, this proved to be the meaning of it, a sacrifice was provided instead of Isaac. Thus, (1.) Christ the great sacrifice of atonement, was of God's providing; when none in Heaven or earth could have found a lamb for that burnt-offering, God himself found the ransom, *Psal. lxxxix. 20.* (2.) All our sacrifices of acknowledgment are of God's providing too. It is he that *prepares the heart*, *Psal. x. 17.* The broken and contrite spirit is a *sacrifice of God*, *Psal. li. 17.* of his providing.

8. With the same resolution and composedness of mind, after many thoughts of heart, he applies himself to the completing of this sacrifice, *ver. 9, 10.* He goes on with a holy willfulness, after many a weary step, and with a heavy heart he arrives at length at the fatal place, builds the altar, *an altar of earth*, we may suppose, the saddest that ever he built, and he had built many a one, *lays the wood in order* for his Isaac's funeral pile, and now tells him the amazing news, Isaac thou art the Lamb which God has provided; and, for ought appears, Isaac is as willing as Abraham, we do not find that he made any objection against it, any petition for his life, that he attempted to make his escape, much less that he struggled with his aged father, or made any resistance; Abraham doth it, God will have it done, and Isaac has learned to submit to both, Abraham, no doubt, comforting him with the same hopes, with *which he himself* by faith was comforted: Yet it is necessary that a sacrifice be bound. The great sacrifice, which, in the fullness of time, was to be offered up, must be bound, and therefore so must Isaac: But with what heart could tender Abraham tie those guiltless hands that, perhaps, had oft been lifted up to ask him blessing, and stretched out to embrace him, and were now the more straitly bound with the cords of love and duty? However, it must be done: Having bound him, he *lays him upon the altar*, and his hand upon the head of his sacrifice; and now, we may suppose, with floods of tears, he gives, and takes the final farewell of a parting kiss, perhaps he takes another for Sarah, from her dying son: This being done, he resolutely forgets the bowels of a father, and puts on the awful gravity of a sacrificer; with a fixed heart, and an eye lifted up to Heaven, he takes the knife, and stretches out his hand to give the fatal cut to Isaac's throat: Be astonished, O Heavens at this, and wonder, O earth! Here is an act of faith and obedience, which deserves to be a spectacle to God, angels, and men. Abraham's darling, Sarah's laughter, the churches hope, the heir of promise, lies ready to bleed and die by his own father's hand, who never smays at the doing it. Now this obedience of Abraham in offering up Isaac, is a lively representation, 1. Of the love of God to us, in delivering up his only begotten son to suffer and die for us, as a sacrifice; it *pleased the Lord* himself to *bruise him*: See *Zech. xiii. 7.* Abraham was obliged both in duty and gratitude to part with Isaac, and parted with him to a friend, but God was under no obligations to us, for we were enemies. 2. Of our duty to God in return of that love; we must tread in the steps of this faith of Abraham. God, by his word,

calls us to part with all for Christ, all our sins, though they have been as a right hand, or a right eye, or an Isaac; all those things that are competitors and rivals with Christ for the sovereignty of the heart, *Luke xiv. 26.* and we must cheerfully let them all go. God by his providence, which is truly the voice of God, calls us to part with an Isaac sometimes, and we must do it by a cheerful resignation, and submission to his holy will, *1 Sam. iii. 18.*

11. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I. 12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked and behold, behind him a ram caught for him in a thicket by his horns: And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, in the stead of his son. 14. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireth: as it is said to this day, in the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

Hitherto this story has been very melancholy, and seems to hasten towards a most tragical period, but here the sky of a sudden clears up, the sun breaks out, a bright and pleasant scene opens; the same hand that had wounded and cast down here, heals and lifts up, for tho' he cause grief, he will have compassion: *The angel of the Lord*, that is, God himself, the eternal word, the angel of the covenant, who was to be the great redeemer and comforter, he interposed, and put a happy issue to this trial.

1. Isaac is rescued, *ver. 11, 12.* The command to offer him was intended only for trial, and it appearing upon trial, that Abraham did indeed love God better than he loved Isaac, the end of the command was answered, and therefore the order is countermanded without any reflection at all upon the unchangeableness of the divine counsels, *Lay not thine hand upon the lad.* Note, 1. Our creature comforts are then most likely to be continued to us when we are most willing to resign them up to God's will. 2. God's time to help and relieve his people, is, when they are brought to the greatest extremity: The more imminent the danger is, and the *nearest to be put in execution*, the more wonderful, and the more welcome is the deliverance.

2. Abraham is not only approved, but applauded. He obtains an honourable testimony, that *he is righteous*: *Now know I that thou fearest God*: God knew it before, but now Abraham had given a most memorable evidence of it. He needed do no more, what he had done was sufficient to prove the religious regard he had to God and his authority. Note, (1.) When God by his providence, hinders the performance of our sincere intentions in his services, he graciously accepts the will for the deed, and the honest endeavour though it come short of finishing. (2.) The best evidence of our fearing God, is our being willing to serve and honour him with that which is dearest to us, and to part with all to him, or, for him.

3. *Another sacrifice* is provided instead of Isaac, *ver. 13.* Now the altar was built, and the wood laid in order, it was necessary that something should be offered. For, 1. God must be acknowledged with thankfulness and deliverance of Isaac: and the sooner the better, when here is an altar ready. 2. Abraham's words must be made good, *God will provide himself of a lamb*: God will not disappoint those expectations of his people, which are of his own raising, but according to their faith it is to them, *Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established.* 3. Reference must be had to the promised Messiah, the blessed seed. (1.) Christ was sacrificed in our stead, as this ram instead of Isaac, and his death was our discharge, *Here am I*, said he, *let these go their way.* (2.) Though that blessed seed was now lately promised and typified by Isaac, yet the offering of him up should be suspended, till the latter end of the world, and, in the mean time, the sacrifice of beasts should be accepted, as this Ram was, as a *pledge of that expiation*, which should one day be made by that great sacrifice. And, it is observable, that the temple, the place of sacrifice, was afterwards built upon this mount *Moriab*, *2 Chr. iii. 1.* and mount *Calvary*, where Christ was crucified, was not far off.

4. A new name was given to the place, to the honour of God, and, for the encouragement of all believers to the end of the world, cheerfully to trust God in the way of obedience; *Jehovah-jireth*, *The Lord will provide*, *ver. 14.* probably alluding to what he had said, *ver. 8. God will provide himself a lamb.* It was not owing to any contrivance of Abraham, nor was it in answer to his prayer, though he was a famous intercessor, but it was purely the Lord's doing: Let it be recorded for generations to come. (1.) That *the Lord will see*; he will always have his eye upon his people in their straits and distresses, that he may come in with seasonable succour in the critical juncture. (2.) That he will be *seen*, be seen in the mount, in the greatest perplexities of his people; he will not only manifest, but magnify his wisdom, power, and goodness, in their deliverance; where God *sees* and *provides*, he should be *seen* and *praised*; and perhaps it may refer to *God manifest in the flesh*.



15. And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time. 16. And said by myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17. That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand that is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice. 19. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

Abraham's obedience was graciously accepted, but that was not all, here we have it recompensed, abundantly recompensed, before he stirred from the place; probably while the ram he had sacrificed was yet burning, God sent him this gracious message; renewed and ratified his covenant with him: All covenants were made by sacrifice, so was this by the typical sacrifices of Isaac and the ram; very high expressions here are of God's favour to Abraham, in this confirmation of the covenant with him, above any he had yet been blessed with. Note, extraordinary services shall be crowned with honours and comforts extraordinary; and favours in the promise, though not yet performed, ought to be accounted real and valuable recompences.

1. God is pleased to make mention of Abraham's obedience as the consideration of the covenant, and he speaks of it with an encomium, *ver. 1. Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son*, he lays a mighty emphasis upon that, and, *ver. 18, praises it as an act of obedience, in it thou hast obeyed my voice, and to obey is better than sacrifice*. Nor that this was a proportionable consideration, but God graciously put this honour upon that by which Abraham had honoured God.

2. God now confirmed the promise with an oath. It was said and sealed before, but now it is sworn. *By myself have I sworn*, for he could swear by no greater, *Heb. vi. 13*. Thus he interposed himself by an oath, as the apostle expresseth it there, *ver. 17. he did (to speak with reverence) even pawn his own life and being upon it, As I live*. That by all those immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, he and his might have strong consolation. Note, If we exercise faith God will encourage it. Improve the promises and God will ratify them.

3. The particular promise here renewed is that of a numerous off-spring, *ver. 17. multiplying I will multiply thee*. Note, Those that are willing to part with any thing for God shall have it made up to them with unspeakable advantage. Abraham has but one son, and is willing to part with that one in obedience to God; Well, saith God, thou shalt be recompensed with thousands and millions. What a figure doth the seed of Abraham make in history! How numerous how illustrious were his known descendants, who to this day triumph in this, that they have Abraham to their father. Thus he received a thousand fold in this time, *Matth. xix. 29*.

4. The promise doubtless points at the Messiah, and the grace of the gospel. This is the oath sworn to our father Abraham, which Zecharias refers to, *Luk. i. 73, &c.* And so here is a promise, (1.) Of the great blessing of the spirit, *in blessing I will bless thee*, viz. with that best of blessings, the gift of the Holy Ghost; the promise of the Spirit was that blessing of Abraham which was to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, *Gal. iii. 14*. (2.) Of the increase of the church; that believers, his spiritual seed, should be many as the stars of Heaven. (3.) Of spiritual victories. *Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies*. Believers by their faith overcome the world, and triumph over all the powers of darkness, and are more than conquerors. Probably Zecharias refers to this part of the oath, *Luk. i. 74. That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear*. But the crown of all is the last promise, (4.) Of the Incarnation of Christ. In thy seed (one particular person that shall descend from thee, for he speaks not of many but of one, as the apostle observes, *Gal. iii. 16*.) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, or shall bless themselves, as the phrase is, *Isa. lxv. 16*. In him all may be happy if they will, and all that belong to him shall be so, and shall think themselves so. Christ is the great blessing of the world. Abraham was ready to give up his son for a sacrifice to the honour of God, and on that occasion God promised to give his son a sacrifice for the salvation of man.

20. And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; 21. Huz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, 22. And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. 23. And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor Abraham's brother. 24. And his concubine whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

Nº. III.

This is recorded here, 1. To shew that though Abraham saw his own family highly dignified with peculiar privileges, admitted into covenant, and blessed with the entail of the promise, yet he did not look with contempt and disdain upon his relations, but was glad to hear of the increase and prosperity of their families. 2. To make way for the following story of the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, a daughter of this family.

### C H A P. XXIII.

Here is, 1. Abraham a mourner for the death of Sarah, *ver. 1, 2*. 2. Abraham a purchaser of a burying-place for Sarah. 1. The purchase humbly proposed by Abraham, *ver. 3, 4*. 2. Fairly treated of, and agreed with a great deal of mutual civility and respect, *ver. 5—16*. 3. The purchase-money paid, *ver. 16*. 4. The premises conveyed and secured to Abraham, *ver. 17, 18, 20*. 5. Sarah's funeral, *ver. 19*.

1. **A**ND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2. And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

We have here, 1. Sarah's age, *ver. 1*. Almost forty years before she had called her self old, chap. xviii. 12. Old people will die never the sooner, but may die the better, for reckoning themselves old. 2. Her death, *ver. 2*. The longest liver must die at last. Abraham and Sarah had lived comfortably together many years, but death parts those whom nothing else could part. The special friends and favourites of Heaven are not exempted from the stroke of death. She died in the land of Canaan where she had been above sixty years a sojourner. 3. Abraham's mourning for her, and he was a true mourner. He did not only perform the ceremonies of mourning according to the custom of those times, as the mourners that go about the streets, but he did sincerely lament the great loss he had of a good wife, and gave proof of the constancy of his affection to her to the last. Therefore two words are used, he came both to mourn and to weep. His sorrow was not counterfeit but real. He came to her tent and sat down by the corps, there to pay the tribute of her tears, that his eye might affect his heart, and that he might pay the greater respect to the memory of her that was gone. Note, It is not only lawful but duty to lament the death of our near relations, both in compliance with the providence of God who thus calls to weeping and mourning, and in honour to those to whom honour is due. Tears are a tribute due to our deceased friends, when the body is sown it must be watered, but we must not sorrow as those that have no hope, for we have a good hope through grace both concerning them, and concerning ourselves.

3. And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, 4. I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. 5. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him. 6. Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince amongst us; in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. 7. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. 8. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar: 9. That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying place amongst you. 10. And Ephron dwelt amongst the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gates of his city, saying, 11. Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. 12. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 13. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. 14. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 15. My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

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Here is, 1. The humble request which Abraham made to his neighbours the Hittites, for a burying-place among them, *ver. 3, 4.* It was strange he had this to do now, but we are to impute it rather to God's providence than to his improvidence, as appears *Acts vii. 7.* where it is said, *God gave him no inheritance in Canaan.* It were well if all those who take care to provide burying-places for their bodies after death, were as careful to provide a resting-place for their souls. Observe here,

(1.) The convenient diversion which this affair gave for the present to Abraham's grief, *he stood up from before his dead.* Those that find themselves in danger of over grieving for their dead relations, and are entering into that temptation must take heed of poring upon their loss, and of sitting alone and melancholy. There must be a time of standing up from before their dead, and ceasing to mourn. For thanks be to God our happiness is not bound up in the life of any creature. Care of the funeral may be improved to divert grief for the death, as here, at first when it is in most danger of tyrannising. Weeping must not hinder sowing.

(2.) The argument he used with the children of Heth, which was this, *I am a stranger and a sojourner with you,* therefore I am unprovided, and must become a humble suitor to you, for a burying-place. This was one occasion which Abraham took to confess that he was a stranger, and a pilgrim upon earth, he was not ashamed to own it thus publicly, *Heb. xi. 13.* Note, The death of our relations should effectually mind us that we are not at home in this world. When they are gone, say, we are going.

(3.) His uneasiness till this affair was settled, intimated in that word, *that I may bury my dead out of my sight.* Note, Death will make those unpleasant to our sight who while they lived were the desire of our eyes. The countenance that was fresh and lively becomes pale and ghastly, and fit to be removed into the land of darkness. While she was in his sight it renewed his grief which he would prevent.

2. The generous offer which the children of Heth made to him, *ver. 5, 6.* They complement him, (1.) With a title of respect; *Thou art a prince of God among us.* So the word is, not only great but good. He called himself a stranger and a sojourner, they call him a great prince, for those that humble themselves shall be exalted. God had promised to make Abraham's name great. (2.) With a tender of the best of their burying-places. Note, Even the light of nature teaches us to be civil and respectful towards all, though they be strangers and sojourners; The noble generosity of these Canaanites shames and condemns the closeness and selfishness, and ill humour, of many that call themselves Israelites. Observe, That these Canaanites would be glad to mingle their dust with Abraham's, and to have their last end like his.

3. The particular proposal which Abraham made to them, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* He returns them his humble thanks for their kind offer, with all possible decency and respect; though a great man, an old man, and now a mourner, yet he stands up and makes them a very low congee, *ver. 7.* Note, Religion teaches good manners, and those abuse it that place it in rudeness, and clownishness. He then pitches upon the place he thought most convenient, viz. the cave of Machpelah, which probably lay near him, and had yet not been used for a burying-place. The present owner was Ephron; Abraham cannot pretend to any interest in him, but he desires that they would improve theirs with him, to get the purchase of that cave, and the field in which it was. Note, A moderate desire to obtain that which is convenient for us by fair and honest means is not such a coveting of that which is our neighbour's, as is forbidden in the tenth commandment.

4. The present which Ephron made to Abraham of his field, *ver. 10, 11.* *the field give I thee.* Abraham thought he must be intreated to sell it, but upon the first mention of it without intreaty he freely gives it. Some men have more generosity than they are thought to have. Abraham no doubt had taken all occasions to oblige his neighbours, and to do them any courtesy that lay in his power, and now they return his kindness, for *he that watereth shall be watered also himself.* Note, If those that profess religion adorn their profession by eminent civility and serviceableness to all, they shall find it will redound to their own comfort and advantage, as well as to the glory of God.

5. Abraham's modest and sincere refusal of Ephron's kind offer, *ver. 12, 13.* Abundance of thanks he returns him for it, *ver. 12.* makes his honours to him before the people of the land, that they might respect Ephron the more for the respect they saw Abraham give him, *1 Sam. xv. 30.* but resolves to give him money for the field, even the full value of it. It was not in pride that Abraham refused the gift, because he scorned to be beholden to Ephron; but, (1.) In justice: Abraham was rich in silver and gold, *chap. xiii. 2.* and was able to pay for the field, and therefore would not take advantage of Ephron's generosity. Note, honesty as well as honour forbid us to sponge upon our neighbours, and to impose upon those that are free. Job reflected upon it, with comfort when he was poor, that he had not *eaten the fruits of his land without money,* *Job xxxi. 39.* (2.) In prudence. He would pay for it, lest Ephron when this good humour was over, should upbraid him

with it, and say, *I have made Abraham rich,* *Gen. xiv. 23.* Or, lest the next heir should question Abraham's title, because that grant was made without any consideration, and claim back the field. Thus David afterwards refused Ornan's offer, *2 Sam. xxiv. 24.* We know not what affronts we may hereafter receive from those that are now most kind and generous.

6. The price of the land ascertained by Ephron, but not insisted on, *ver. xiv. 15.* *The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver,* about fifty pound of our money, *but what is that between me and thee?* He would rather oblige his friend than have so much money in his pocket. Herein Ephron discovers,

1. A great contempt of worldly wealth. What is that between me and thee? It is a small matter, not worth speaking of. Many a one would have said, it is a deal of money, it will go far in a child's portion, but Ephron saith, What is that? Note, it is an excellent thing for people to have low and mean thoughts of this world and the wealth of it; it is that which is not, and in the abundance of which a man's life doth not consist, *Luke xii. 15.*

2. Great courtesy, and obligingness to his friend and neighbour. Ephron was not jealous of Abraham as a foreigner and an inmate, nor envious at him as a man likely to thrive and grow rich, bore him no ill-will for his singularity in religion, but was much kinder to him than most people now a-days are to their own brothers. *What is that between me and thee?* Note, No little thing should break squares between true friends. When we are tempted to be hot in resenting affronts, high in demanding our rights, or hard in denying a kindness, we should answer the temptation with this question, What is that between me and my friend.

16. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. 17. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure. 18. Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. 19. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. 20. And the field and the cave that is therein were made sure unto Abraham, for a possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth.

We have here the conclusion of the treaty between Abraham and Ephron about the burying-place. The bargain was publicly made before all the neighbours, in the *presence and audience of the sons of Heth,* *ver. 16, 17.* Note, prudence as well as justice directs us to be fair and open and above-board in our dealings; fraudulent contracts hate the light, and chuse to be clandestine, but they that design honestly in their bargains care not who are witnesses to them. Our law countenanceth sales made in market overt, and by deed enrolled.

1. Abraham without fraud, covin, or further delay, pays the money, *ver. 16.* he pays it readily without dodging, pays it in full without diminution, and pays it by weight current money with the merchant, without deceit. See how antiently money was used for the help of commerce: and see how honestly money should be paid where it is due. Observe, Though all the land of Canaan was Abraham's by promise, yet the time of his possessing being not come, what he had now occasion for he bought and paid for. Note, Dominion is not founded in grace. The saints title to an eternal inheritance doth not entitle them to the possessions of this world, nor justify them in doing wrong.

2. Ephron honestly and fairly makes him a good title to the land, *ver. 17, 18, 20.* The field with all its appurtenances is conveyed to Abraham and his heirs for ever in open court, not by writing, it doth not appear that that was then used, but by such a publick solemn declaration before witnesses as was sufficient to pass it. Note, As that which is bought must be honestly paid for, so that which is sold must be honestly delivered and secured.

3. Abraham thereupon takes possession, and buries Sarah in the cave or vault (whether framed by nature or art is not certain) which was in the purchased field. It is likely Abraham had buried servants out of his family since he came to Canaan, but the *graves of the common people* (*2 Kings xxiii. 6.*) might suffice for them; now Sarah was dead, a peculiar place must be found for her remains. It is worth noting, 1. That a burying-place was the first spot of ground Abraham was possessed of in Canaan. Note, When we are entering into the world, it is good to think of our going out of it, for as soon as we are born we begin to die. 2. That it was the only piece of land he was ever possessed of, though it was all his own in reversion. Those that have least of this



this earth find a grave in it. Abraham provided not cities, as Cain and Nimrod, but a sepulchre, (1.) To be a constant *memorandum* of death to himself and his posterity, that he and they might learn to die daily. This sepulchre is said to be *at the end of the field*, ver. 9. for whatever our possessions are, there is a sepulchre at the end of them. (2.) To be a token of his belief and expectation of the resurrection; for what need such care be taken of the body, if it be thrown away for ever, and must not rise again. Abraham in this, said plainly, that he *sought a better country*, that is, *a heavenly*. Abraham is content to be still flitting while he lives, but secures a place where, when he dies, his flesh may rest in hope.

## C H A P. XXIV.

*Marriages and funerals are the changes of families, and the common news among the inhabitants of the villages. In the foregoing chapter we had Abraham burying his wife, here we have him marrying his son. These stories concerning his family with their minute circumstances are largely related, while the histories of the kingdoms of the world then in being, with their revolutions, are buried in silence; for the Lord knows them that are his. The subjoining of Isaac's marriage to Sarah's funeral (with a particular reference to it, ver. 67.) shews us that as one generation passeth away, another generation comes, and thus the entail both of the human nature, and of the covenant is preserved. Here is, 1. Abraham's care about the marrying of his son, and the charge he gave to his servant about it, ver. 1—9. 2. His servant's journey into Abraham's country to seek a wife for his young master among his own relations, ver. 10—14. 3. The kind providence which brought him acquainted with Rebekah, whose father was Isaac's cousin-german, ver. 15—28. 4. The treaty of marriage with her relations, ver. 29—49. 5. Their consent obtained, ver. 50—60. 6. The happy meeting and marriage between Isaac and Rebekah, ver. 61, ad fin.*

1. **A**ND Abraham was old and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 3. And I will make the swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell: 4. But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. 5. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? 6. And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again. 7. The LORD God of heaven which took me from my fathers house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. 8. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. 9. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

Three things we may observe here concerning Abraham.

1. The care he took of a good son; to get him married; well married. It was high time to think of it now, for Isaac was about forty years old, and it had been customary with his ancestors to marry at thirty or sooner, Gen. xi. 14, 18, 22, 24. Abraham believed the promise of the building up of his family, and therefore did not make haste; not more haste than good speed. Two considerations moved him to think of it now, ver. 1. That he himself was likely to leave the world quickly, for he was *old and well-stricken in age*, and it would be a satisfaction to him to see his son settled before he died. And that he had a good estate to leave behind him, for *the Lord had blessed him in all things*. And the blessing of the Lord that makes rich. See how much religion and piety, befriend outward prosperity. Now Abraham's pious care concerning his son was, 1. That he should not marry with a daughter of Canaan, but with one of his kindred; because he saw by observation that the Canaanites were degenerating into great wickedness, and knew by revelation that they were designed for ruin; and therefore he would not marry his son among them lest they should be either a *snare to his soul*, or, at least, a blot to his name. 2. That yet he should not leave the land of Canaan, to go himself among his kindred, no not so much as to go a-voing thither, lest he should be tempted to settle there. This caution is given, ver. 6. and repeated, ver. 8. *Bring not my son thither again* whatever comes of it. Let him rather want a wife than expose himself to that temptation. Note, parents in disposing of their

children, should carefully consult the welfare of their souls, and their furtherance in the way to Heaven. Those who thro' grace have *escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*, and have brought up their children, accordingly should take heed of doing any thing by which they may be again *entangled therein and overcome*, 2 Pet. ii. 20. Beware that you *bring them not thither again*, Heb. xi. 15.

2. The charge he gave to a good servant; probably Eliezer of Damascus, one whose conduct, fidelity, and affection to him and his family, he had had long experience of. He trusted him with this great affair, and not Isaac himself, because he would not have Isaac go at all into that country, but marry thither by proxy; and no proxy so fit as this *steward of his house*. This matter is settled between the master and the servant with a great deal of care and solemnity. (1.) The servant must be bound by an oath to do his utmost to get a wife for Isaac, from among his relations, ver. 2, 3, 4. Abraham swears him to it, both for his own satisfaction, and for the engagement of his servant, to all possible care and diligence in this matter. Thus God swears his servants to their work, that having sworn they may perform it. Honour is here done to the eternal God, for he it is that is sworn by, to whom alone those appeals ought to be made. And some think honour is done to the covenant of circumcision by the ceremony here used of *putting his hand under his thigh*. Note, Swearing being an ordinance not peculiar to the church but common to mankind, is to be performed by such signs as are the appointments and common usages of our country, for ascertaining the person sworn. (2.) He must be clear of this oath if when he had done his utmost he could not prevail. This proviso the servant prudently inserted, ver. 5. putting the case that the woman would not follow him, and Abraham allowed the exception, ver. 8. Note; Oaths are to be taken with great caution, and the matter sworn to rightly understood and limited, because it is a *snare to devour that which is holy*, and *after vows to make the enquiry*, which should have been made before.

3. The confidence he put in a good God, who, he doubts not, will give his servant success in this undertaking, ver. 7. He remembers that God had wonderfully brought him out of the land of his nativity, by the effectual call of his grace, and therefore doubts not but he will succeed him in his care, not to *bring his son thither again*. He remembers also the promise God had made and confirmed to him that he would give Canaan to his seed, and thence infers, that God would own him in his endeavour to match his son from among those devoted nations, to one that was fit to be the mother of such a seed. Fear not therefore, he shall send his angel before thee to *make thy way prosperous*. Note, 1. Those that carefully keep in the way of duty, and govern themselves by the principles of their religion in their designs and undertakings have good reason to expect prosperity and success in them. God will issue that to our comfort in which we sincerely aim at his glory. 2. God's promises and our own experiences are sufficient to encourage our dependance upon God, and our expectations from him in all the affairs of this life. 3. God's angels are ministering spirits sent forth not only for the protection but guidance of the heirs of promise, Heb. i. 14. *He shall send his angel before thee*, and then thou wilt speed well.

10. And the servant took ten camels, of the camels of his master, and departed (for all the goods of his master were in his hand :) and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. 11. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water, at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. 12. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. 13. Behold, I stand here by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: 14. And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. 15. And it came to pass before he had done speaking, that behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel son of Milcah the wife of Nahor Abrahams brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. 16. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her, and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. 17. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me (I pray thee) drink a little water of thy pitcher; 18. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. 19. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. 20. And



20. And she haſted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. 21. And the man wondering at her, held his peace, to wit, whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous, or not. 22. And it came to paſs as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring, of half a ſhekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten ſhekels weight of gold; 23. And ſaid, Whoſe daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy fathers houſe for us to lodge in? 24. And ſhe ſaid unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the ſon of Milcah, which ſhe bare unto Nahor. 25. She ſaid moreover unto him, We have both ſtraw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. 26. And the man bowed down his head, and worſhipped the LORD. 27. And he ſaid, Bleſſed be the LORD God of my maſter Abraham, who hath not left deſtitute my maſter of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the houſe of my maſters brethren. 28. And the damſel ran, and told them of her mothers houſe theſe things.

Abraham's ſervant now begins to make a figure in this ſtory, and though he be not named, yet much is here recorded to his honour, and for an example to all ſervants, who ſhall be honoured, if by faithful ſerving God and their maſters, *they adorn the doctrine of Chriſt*, compare *Prov.* xxvii. 18. with *Titus* ii. 10. for there is no reſpect of perſons with God, *Col.* iii. 24, 25. A good ſervant that makes conſcience of the duty of his place, and doth it in the fear of God though he make not a figure in the world, nor have praiſe of men, yet ſhall be owned and accepted of God, and have praiſe of him. Obſerve here,

1. How faithful Abraham's ſervant approved himſelf to his maſter. Having received his charge, with all expedition he took his journey, putting himſelf into an equipage fit for his negotiation, *ver.* 10. *and he had all the goods of his maſter*, i. e. a ſchedule or particular account of them, *in his hand*, to ſhew to thoſe with whom he was to treat, for from firſt to laſt he conſulted his maſter's honour. Iſaac being a type of Chriſt, ſome make this fetching of a wife for him to ſignify the eſpouſing of the church by the agency of his ſervants the miniſters. The church is *the bride, the lambs wife*, *Rev.* xxi. 9. Chriſt is the bridegroom, and miniſters *the friends of the bridegroom* (*John* iii. 29.) whoſe work it is to perſuade ſouls to conſent to him, *2 Cor.* xi. 2. The ſpouſe of Chriſt muſt not be of the Canaanites, but of his own kindred, born again from above. Miniſters, like Abraham's ſervant, muſt lay out themſelves with the utmoſt wiſdom and care to ſerve their maſters intereſt herein.

2. How devoutly he acknowledged God in this affair, like one of that happy houſhold which Abraham had *commanded to keep the way of the Lord*, &c. chap. xviii. 19. He arrived early in the evening (after many days journeying) at the place he deſigned for, and repoſed himſelf by a well of water to conſider how he might manage his buſineſs for the beſt. And, 1. He acknowledged God by a particular prayer, *ver.* 12, 13, 14. wherein he (1.) he petitions for proſperity and good ſucceſs in this affair. *Send me good ſpeed this day*. Note, We have leave to be particular in recommending our affairs to the conduct and care of the divine providence. Thoſe that would have good ſpeed muſt pray for it this day, in this affair; thus we muſt *in all our ways acknowledge God*, *Prov.* iii. 6. And if we thus look up to God in every undertaking which we are in care about, we ſhall have the comfort of having done our duty, whatever the iſſue be. (2.) He pleads God's covenant with his maſter Abraham. *O God of my maſter Abraham ſhew kindneſs to him*. Note, As the children of good parents, ſo the ſervants of good maſters may from thence take encouragement in prayer to God for proſperity and ſucceſs. (3.) He propoſeth a ſign, *ver.* 14. not by it to limit God, or with a deſign to proceed no further if he were not gratified in it; but it is a prayer (1.) That God would provide a very good wife for his young maſter; and that was a good prayer. He knew that *a prudent wife is from the Lord*, *Prov.* xix. 14. and therefore that for this he will be enquired of. He deſires that his maſter's wife might be a humble and houſewifely woman, bred up to care and labour, and willing to put her hand to any work that was to be done: and that ſhe might be of a courteous diſpoſition, and charitable to ſtrangers. When he came to ſeek a wife for his maſter, he did not go to the playhouſe or the park, and pray that he might meet one there, but to the well of water, expecting to find one there well employed. (2.) That he would pleaſe to make his way in this matter plain and clear before him, by the concurrence of minute circumſtances in his favour. Note, 1. It is the comfort, as well as the belief, of a good man, that God's providence extends itſelf to the ſmalleſt occurrences, and admirably ſerves it's own purpoſes by them. Our times are in God's hand: not only events themſelves, but the times of them. 2. It is our wiſdom in all our affairs to follow providence, and folly to force it. 3. It is very deſirable, and that which we may lawfully pray for, while in the general we ſet God's will before us as our rule that he will by hints of providence

direct us in the way of our duty, and give us indications what his mind is. Thus he guides his people *with his eye*, *Pſal.* xxxii. 8 and leads them in a *plain path*, *Pſal.* xxvii. 11.

2. God owned him by a particular providence. He decreed *the thing* and it was *eſtabliſhed to him*, *Job* xxii. 28. According to his faith ſo was it unto him. The answer to his prayer was, 1. *Speedy before he had made an end of ſpeaking*, *ver.* 15. as it is written. *Iſa* lxxv. 24. *while they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear*: Though we are backward to pray, God is forward to hear prayer. 2. Satisfactory. The firſt that came to draw water was and did in every thing according to his own heart. (1.) She was ſo well qualified, that in all reſpects ſhe answered the characters he wiſhed for in the woman that was to be his maſter's wife, handſome and healthful, humble and induſtrious, very courteous and obliging to a ſtranger, and having all the marks of a good humour: when ſhe came to the well, *ver.* 16. ſhe went down and *filled her pitcher, and came up to go home* with it, ſhe did not ſtand to gaze upon the ſtrange man and his camels, but minded her buſineſs, and would not have been diverted from it but by an opportunity of doing good: ſhe did not curiouſly or confidently enter into diſcourſe with him, but modeſtly answered him with all the *decorum* that became her ſex. What a degenerate age do we live in, in which appear all the inſtances of pride, luxury, and lazineſs, the reverſe of Rebekah's character, whoſe daughters few are: thoſe inſtances of goodneſs which were then in honour are now in contempt. (2.) Providence ſo ordered it that ſhe did that which exactly answered his ſign, and was wonderful pat to his propoſal: ſhe not only gave him drink, but, which was more than could have been expected, ſhe offered her ſervice to give his camels drink, which was the very ſign he propoſed. Note, 1. God in his providence doth ſometimes wonderfully own the prayer of faith, and gratifies the innocent deſires of his praying people, even in little things, that he may ſhew the extent of his care, and may encourage them at all times to ſeek to him, and truſt in him: yet we muſt take heed of being overbold in preſcribing to God, leſt the event ſhould weaken our faith rather than ſtrengthen it. 2. It is good to take all opportunities of ſhewing a humble, courteous, charitable diſpoſition, becauſe ſome time or other it may turn more to our honour and benefit than we think of: ſome hereby have entertained angels, and Rebekah hereby, quite beyond her expectation at this time, was brought into the line of Chriſt and the covenant. 3. There may be a great deal of obliging kindneſs in that which is but little coſt: our Saviour has promiſed a reward for a cup of cold water, like this here, *Matth.* x. 42. 4. The concurrence of providences, and their minute circumſtances for the furtherance of our ſucceſs in any buſineſs, ought to be particularly obſerved with wonder and thankfulneſs to the glory of God, *the man wondered*, *ver.* 21. we have been wanting to ourſelves, both in duty and comfort, by neglecting to obſerve providence. (3.) Upon enquiry he found, to his great ſatisfaction, that ſhe was a near relation to his maſter, and that the family ſhe was of was conſiderable, and able to give him entertainment, *ver.* 23, 24, 25. Note, Providence ſometimes wonderfully directs thoſe that by faith and prayer ſeek direction from Heaven in the choice of ſuitable yoke-fellows: happy marriages thoſe are likely to be that are made in the fear of God, and thoſe we are ſure are *made in Heaven*.

3. Abraham's ſervant acknowledges God in a particular thanksgiving. He firſt paid his reſpects to Rebekah in gratitude for her civility, *ver.* 22. obliging her with ſuch ornaments and attire as a maid, eſpecially a *bride*, cannot forget, *Jer.* ii. 32. which yet we would think diſagreeable to the *pitcher of water*, but the ear-rings and bracelets ſhe ſometimes wore, did not make her think herſelf above the labours of the virtuous woman, (*Prov.* xxxi. 13.) that *worketh willingly with her hands*, nor the ſervices of a child, which while *under age*, differs nothing from a ſervant, *Gal.* iv. 1. Having done this, he turns his wonder, *ver.* 21. into worſhipping, *ver.* 26, 27. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of my maſter Abraham*. Obſerve here, 1. He had prayed for good ſpeed, *ver.* 12. and now he had ſped well he gives thanks. Note, What we win by prayer we muſt wear with praiſe, for mercies in answer to prayer are in a particular manner obliging. 2. He had as yet but a comfortable proſpect of mercy, and was not certain what the iſſue might prove, yet he gives thanks. Note, When God's favours are coming towards us we muſt meet them with our praiſes. 3. He bleſſeth God for ſucceſs when he was negotiating for his maſter. Note, We ſhould be thankful for our friend's mercies as for our own. 4. He gives thanks that being in the way, at a loſs what courſe to ſteer the Lord had lead him. Note, In doubtful caſes it is very comfortable to ſee God leading us as he led Iſrael in the wilderneſs by the pillar of cloud and fire. 5. He thinks himſelf very happy, and owns God in it, that he was led to the *houſe of his maſters brethren*, thoſe of them that were come out of *Ur of the Chaldees*, though they were not come to Canaan, but ſtaid in Haran. They were not idolaters but worſhippers of the true God, and inclinable to the religion of Abraham's family. Note, God is to be acknowledged in providing ſuitable yoke-fellows, eſpecially ſuch as are agreeable in religion. 6. He acknowledges that God herein had not left his maſter *deſtitute of his mercy and truth*. God had promiſed to build up Abraham's family, yet it ſeemed deſtitute of the benefit of that promiſe, but now providence is working towards the accompliſhment of it. Note, 1.



God's faithful ones, how destitute soever they may be of worldly comforts, shall never be left destitute of God's mercy and truth; for God's mercy is an inexhaustible fountain, and his truth an inviolable foundation. 2. It adds much to the comfort of any blessing to see in it the continuance of God's mercy and truth.

29. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. 30. And it came to pass when he saw the ear-ring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man, and behold he stood by the camels at the well. 31. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD, wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. 32. And the man came into the house, and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the mens feet, that were with him. 33. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told my errand. And he said, speak on. 34. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. 35. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly, and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and men servants, and maid servants, and camels, and asses. 36. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. 37. And my master made me swear, saying, thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: 38. but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. 39. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. 40. And he said unto me, the LORD before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house. 41. Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not the one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. 42. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: 43. Behold I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee a little water of thy pitcher to drink; 44. And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. 45. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, Behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: And I said unto her, let me drink, I pray thee. 46. And she made haste, and let down the pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. 47. And I asked her and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. 48. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. 49. And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me, and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left. 50. Then Laban and Bethuel answered, and said, the thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. 51. Behold Rebekah is before thee, take her and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. 52. And it came to pass, that when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. 53. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: He gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

We have here the making up of the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah; it is related very largely and particularly, even to the minute circumstances, which we would think might have been

pared; while other things of great moment and mystery (as the story of Melchizedek) are related in few words. Thus God conceals that which is curious from the wise and prudent, and reveals to babes that which is common, and level to their capacity, *Matth. xi. 25.* and rules and *saves the world by the foolishness of preaching, 1 Cor. i. 21.* Thus also we are directed to take notice of God's providence in the little common occurrences of human life, and in them also to exercise our own prudence and other graces; for the scripture was not intended only for the use of philosophers and statesmen, but to make us all wise and virtuous in the conduct of ourselves and families.

Here is 1. The very kind reception which Abraham's servant had with Rebekah's relations: Her brother Laban went to invite and conduct him in, but not till he saw the *ear-rings and bracelets upon his sister's hands*, ver. 30. O thinks Laban, here is a man that there is something to be got by, a man that is rich and generous, we will be sure to bid him welcome; we know so much of Laban's character, by the following story, as to think that he would not have been so free of his entertainment if he had not hoped to be well paid for it, as he was, *ver. 53.* Note, *A man's gift maketh room for him*, Prov. xviii. 16. *which way soever it turneth it prospereth*, Prov. xvii. 8.

(1.) The invitation was kind, ver. 31. *Come in, thou blessed of the Lord:* They saw he was rich, and therefore pronounced him, *Blessed of the Lord*; or, perhaps, because they heard from Rebekah (ver. 28.) of the *gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth*; they concluded him a good man, and therefore *blessed of the Lord*. Note, Those that are *blessed of God*, should be welcome to us. It is good owning those whom God owns.

(2.) The entertainment was kind, ver. 32, 33. Both the house and stable were well furnished, and Abraham's servant was free to both. Particular care was taken of the camels, for a *good man regardeth the life of his beast*, Prov. xii. 10. *If the ox knows his owner to serve him*, the owner should know his ox to provide for him, that which is fitting for him.

2. The full account which he gave them of this errand, and the court he makes to them for their consent with Rebekah. Observe, 1. How intent he was upon his business; though he was come off a journey, and come to a good house, he would *not eat till he had told his errand*, ver. 33. Note, The doing of our work, and the fulfilling of our trusts, either for God or man, should be preferred by us before *our necessary food*: It was our Saviour's *meat and drink*, John iv. 34. 2. How ingenious he was in the management of it; he approved himself in this matter both a prudent man, and a man of integrity, faithful to his master, by whom he was trusted, and just to those with whom he now treated.

1. He gives a short account of the state of his master's family, ver. 34, 35, 36. He was welcome before, but we may suppose him doubly welcome, when he said, I am Abraham's servant; Abraham's name, no doubt, was well known among them, and respected, and we may suppose them not altogether ignorant of his state, for Abraham knew theirs, *chap. xxii. 20.* Two things he suggests to recommend his proposal, (1.) That his master Abraham had a very good estate, through the blessing of God, and, (2.) That he had settled it all upon Isaac, for whom he was now a suitor.

2. He tells them the charge his master had given him to fetch a wife for his son from among his kindred, with the reason of it, ver. 37, 38. Thus he insinuates a pleasing hint, that though Abraham was removed to a country at so great a distance, yet he still retained the remembrance of, and a respect for, his relations that he had left behind: The highest degrees of divine affection, must not divest us of natural affection. He likewise obviates an objection, That if Isaac were deserving, he needed not send so far off for a wife, why did he not marry nearer home? For a good reason, (saith he) my master's son must not match with a Canaanite. He further recommends his proposal, (1.) from the faith his master had that it would succeed, ver. 40. He took encouragement from the testimony of his conscience, that he *walked before God in a regular course of holy living*, and thence inferred that God would prosper him; probably he refers to that covenant God had made with him, *chap. xvii. 1. I am God all-sufficient, walk before me*: Therefore, (saith he,) *the God before whom I walk will send his angel*. Note, While we make conscience of our part of the covenant, we may take the comfort of God's part of it: and we should learn to apply general promises to particular cases, as there is occasion. (2.) From the care he himself had taken to preserve their liberty of giving or refusing their consent, as they should see cause without incurring the guilt of perjury, ver. 39, 41, which shewed him in general to be a cautious man, and particularly careful that their consent might not be forced, but be either free or not at all.

3. He relates to them the wonderful concurrence of providences, to countenance and further the proposal, plainly shewing the finger of God in it. (1.) He tells them how he had prayed for direction by a sign, ver. 42, 43, 44. Note, It is good dealing with those, who by prayer take God along with them in their dealings. (2.) How God had answered his prayer in the very letter of it. Though did but *speak in his heart*, ver. 45. which perhaps he mentions lest it should be suspected that Rebekah had over-



heard his prayer, and designedly humoured it; no, faith he, I spake it in my heart, so that none heard it but God, to whom thoughts are words, and from him the answer came, *ver. 46, 47.* (3.) How he had immediately acknowledged God's goodness to him therein, *leading him*, as he expresses it here, *in the right way.* Note, God's way is always the *right way*, *Psal. cvii. 7.* and those are well lead whom he leads.

4. He fairly refers the matter to their consideration, and waits their resolution, *ver. 49.* if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, well and good, if you will be sincerely kind, you will accept the proposal, and I have what I come for, if not, do not hold me in suspense. Note, Those who deal fairly have reason to expect fair dealing.

5. They freely and cheerfully close with the proposal, upon a very good principle, *ver. 50.* *The thing proceedeth from the Lord,* Providence smiles upon it, and we have nothing to say against it. They do not object distance of place, Abraham's forsaking them, his having no land in possession but personal estate only, they do not question the truth of what this man said, but (1.) they *trust much to his integrity.* It were well if honesty did so universally prevail among men, that it might be as much an act of prudence, as it is of good nature, take a man's word. (2.) They *trust more to God's providence*, and therefore by silence give consent, because it appears to be directed and disposed by infinite wisdom. Note, a marriage is then likely to be comfortable, when it appears to proceed from the Lord.

Abraham's servant makes a thankful acknowledgment of the good success he had met with, (1.) to God, *ver. 52.* *he worshipped the Lord.* Observe, (1.) As his good success went on, he went on to bless God: Those that *pray without ceasing*, should in every thing give thanks, and own God in every step of mercy. (2.) God sent his angel before him, and so gave him success, *ver. 7, 40.* But when he has the desired success, he worships God, not the angel. Whatever benefit we have by the ministration of angels, all the glory must be given to the Lord of the angels, *Rev. xxii. 9.* (2.) To the family also he pays his respects, and particularly to the bride, *ver. 53.* He presented her, and her mother, and brother, *with many precious things*: Both to give a real proof of his master's riches, and generosity, and in gratitude for their civility to him, and further to ingratiate himself with them.

54. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night: and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. 55. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. 56. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way: send me away that I may go to my master. 57. And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. 58. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. 59. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. 60. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. 61. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

*Rebekah* is here taking leave of her father's house,

1. Abraham's servant makes pressing instances for a dismissal; though he and his company were very welcome, and very merry there, yet he said, *send me away*, *ver. 54.* and again, *ver. 56.* He knew his master would expect him home with some impatience; he had business to do at home which wanted him, and therefore, as one that preferred his work before his pleasure, he was for hastening home. Note, Lingring and loitering no way becomes a wise and good man; when we have dispatched our business abroad, we must not delay our return to our business at home, nor be longer from it than needs must: for as the bird that *wanders from his nest*, so is he that *wanders from his place*, *Prov. xxvii. 8.*

2. Rebekah's relations from natural affection, and according to the usual expression of kindness in that case, solicit for her stay some time among them, *ver. 55.* They could not think of parting with her on a sudden, especially she being to remove so far off, and it being not likely they should ever see one another again, *Let her stay a few days, at least ten*, which makes it as reasonable a request as the reading in the margin seems to make it unreasonable, a year, or, at least ten months. They had consented to the marriage, and yet were loth to part with her. Note, It is an instance of the vanity of this world, that there is nothing in it so agreeable but it has its alloy, *nulla est sine cera voluptas.* They here were pleased that they had matched a daughter of their family so well, and yet when it came to the

setting to, it was with great reluctance that they sent her away.

3. Rebekah herself determined the matter, to her they appealed, as it was fit they should, *ver. 57.* *Call the damsel* who was retired to her apartment with a modest silence, and *enquire at her mouth.* Note, As children ought not to marry without their parents consent, so parents ought not to marry them without their own. Before the matter is resolved on, ask at the damsel's mouth, she is a party principally concerned, and therefore ought to be principally consulted. Rebekah consented not only to go, but to go presently, *ver. 58.* *I will go.* We may hope that the observations she had made of the servant's piety and devotion, gave her such an idea of the prevalency of religion and godliness in the family she was to go to, as made her desirous to hasten thither, and willing to forget her own people and her father's house, where religion had not so much the ascendant.

4. Hereupon she is sent away with Abraham's servant, we may suppose not the very next day after, but very quickly: her friends see she has a good heart on it, and so they dismiss her, 1. With suitable attendants, her nurse, *ver. 59,* her damsels, *ver. 61.* It seems then when she went to the well for water it was not because she had not servants at command, but because she took a pleasure in the instances of humility and industry. Now she was going among strangers, it was fit she should take those with her whom she was acquainted with. Here is nothing said of her portion: her personal merits were a portion in her, she needed none with her, nor did that ever come into the treaty of marriage. 2. With hearty good wishes, *ver. 60,* *they blessed Rebekah.* Note, When our relations are entering into a new condition, we ought by prayer to recommend them to the blessing and grace of God. Now she was going to be a wife, they prayed that she might be a mother, both of a numerous and of a victorious progeny. Perhaps Abraham's servant had told them of the promise God had lately made his master, which it is likely Abraham acquainted his household with, that God would *multiply his seed as the stars of heaven*, and that they should possess the gate of their enemies, *chap. xxii. 17,* to which promise they had an eye in this blessing, *Be thou the mother of that seed.*

62. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south-country. 63. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the even tide: and he lift up his eyes, and saw, and behold, the camels were coming. 64. And Rebekah lift up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. 65. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail and covered herself. 66. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. 67. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Isaac and Rebekah are at length happily brought together. 1. Isaac was well employed when he met Rebekah, *ver. 62, 63.* *He went out to meditate, or pray, in the field at the even tide.* Some think he expected the return of his servants about this time, and went out on purpose to meet them. But it should seem he went out on another errand, to take the advantage of a silent evening, and a solitary field for meditation and prayer, those divine exercises by which we converse with God, and our own hearts. Note (1.) Holy souls love retirement; it will do us good to be oft left alone, walking alone, and sitting alone, and if we have the art of improving solitude, we shall find we are never less alone than when alone. (2.) Meditation and prayer ought to be both our business and our delight, when we are alone; while we have a God, a Christ, and a Heaven, to acquaint ourselves with, and to secure our interest in, we need not want matter either for meditation and prayer, which, if they go together, will mutually befriend each other. (3.) Our walks in the field are then truly pleasant, when in them we apply ourselves to meditation and prayer: we therefore have a free and open prospect of the Heavens above us, and the earth around us, and the hosts and riches of both, by the view of which we should be led to the contemplation of the maker and owner of all. (4.) The exercises of devotion should be the refreshment and entertainment of the evening, after the care and business of the day, to relieve the fatigue of that, and before the repose and sleep of the night to prepare us for that. (5.) Merciful providences are then doubly comfortable, when they find us well employed, and in the way of our duty: some think Isaac was now praying for good success in this affair that was depending, and meditating upon that which was proper to encourage his hope in God concerning it, and now when he sets himself as it were, upon his watch-tower, to see what God would answer him, as the prophet, *Heb. ii. 1.* *He sees the camels coming*; some time God sends in the mercy prayed for immediately, *Acts xii. 12.*

2. Rebekah behaved herself very decently when she met Isaac: Understanding who he was she *lighted off her camel*, *ver. 64.* and



took a vail and covered herself, ver. 65, in token of humility, modesty, and subjection; she did not reproach Isaac for not coming himself to meet her, or, at least, to meet her a day's journey or two, did not complain of the tediousness of her journey, or the difficulty of leaving her relations to come into a strange place, but having seen providence going before her in the affair, she accommodates herself with cheerfulness to her new relation. Those that by faith are espoused to Christ, and would be presented as chaste virgins, to him must, in conformity to his example, humble themselves, as Rebekah who lighted when she saw Isaac on foot, and must put themselves in subjection to him who is their head, Eph. v. 24. as Rebekah, signifying it by the vail she put on, 1 Cor. xi. 10.

3. They were brought together (probably after some time for acquaintance) to their mutual comfort, ver. 67. Observe here, 1. What an affectionate son he was to his mother: it was about three years since she died, and yet he was not till now comforted concerning it: the wound which that affliction gave to his tender spirit bled so long, and was never healed till God brought him into this new relation: thus crosses and comforts are balances to each other (Eccl. vii. 14.) and help to keep the scale even. 2. What an affectionate husband he was to his wife. Note, Those that have approved themselves well in one relation, it may be hoped will do so in another. *She became his wife, and he loved her*: and all the reason in the world he should, for so ought men to love their wives even as themselves. The duty of the relation is then done, and the comfort of the relation is then enjoyed when mutual love governs, for *there the Lord commands the blessing*.

## C H A P. XXV.

The sacred historian in this chapter, (1.) takes his leave of Abraham with an account, 1. of his children by another wife, ver. 1—4. 2. Of his last will and testament, ver. 5, 6. 3. Of his age, death, and burial, ver. 7, 8, 9, 10. (2.) He takes his leave of Ishmael, with a short account, 1. Of his children, ver. 12—16. 2. Of his age and death, ver. 17, 18. (3.) He enters upon the history of Isaac. 1. His prosperity, ver. 11. 2. The conception and birth of his two sons, with the oracle of God concerning them, ver. 19—26. 3. Their different character, ver. 27, 28. 4. Esau's selling his birthright to Jacob, ver. 29—34.

1. **T**HEN again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. 3. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. 4. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoah and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. 5. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. 6. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts and sent them away from Isaac his son (while he yet lived) eastward, unto the east-country. 7. And these are the days of the years of Abrahams life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. 8. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years; and was gathered to his people. 9. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zoar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; 10. The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

Five and thirty years Abraham lived after the marriage of Isaac, and all that is recorded concerning him during that time, lies here in a very few verses; we hear no more of God's extraordinary appearances to him, or trials of him, for all the days even of the best and greatest saints are not eminent days, some slide on silently, and neither come nor go with observation, such were these last days of Abraham; we have here,

1. An account of his children by Keturah, another wife which he married after the death of Sarah. He had buried Sarah, and married Isaac, the two dear companions of his life, and was now solitary; he wanted a nurse; his family wanted a governess, and it was not good for him to be thus alone, he therefore marries Keturah, probably the chief of his maid-servants, born in his house, or bought with money. Marriage is not forbidden to old age. By her he had six sons, in whom the promise made to Abraham concerning the great increase of his posterity was in part fulfilled, which it is likely he had an eye to in this marriage. The strength he received by the promise still remained in him, to shew how much the virtue of the promise exceeds the power of nature.

2. The disposition which Abraham made of his estate, ver. 5, 6. After the birth of these sons he set his house in order, with

prudence and justice. 1. He made Isaac his heir, as he was bound to do in justice to Sarah his first and principal wife, and to Rebekah who married Isaac upon the assurance of it, chap. xxiv. 36. In this all which he settled upon Isaac perhaps is included the promise of the land of Canaan, and the entail of the covenant. Or, God, having already made him the heir of the promise, Abraham therefore made him heir of his estate. Our loves and gifts should attend God's. 2. He gave portions to the rest of his children, both to Ishmael, though at first he was sent empty away, and to his sons by Keturah. It was justice to provide for them, parents that do not that are worse than infidels. It was prudence to settle them in places distant from Isaac, that they might not pretend to divide the inheritance with him, nor be any way a care or expence to him. Observe, He did this *while he yet lived*, lest it should not have been done, or not so well done, afterwards. Note, In many cases, it is wisdom for men to make their own hands their executors, and what they find to do, to do it while they live as far as they can. These *sons of the concubines* were sent into the country that lay east from Canaan, and their posterity were called the children of the east, famous for their numbers, Judges vi. 33. compare ver. 5. Their great increase was the fruit of the promise made to Abraham that God would multiply his seed. God in dispensing his blessings doth as Abraham did; common blessings he gives to the children of this world, as to the sons of the bond-woman, but covenant-blessings he reserves for the heirs of promise. All that he has is theirs, for they are his Isaac's, from whom the rest shall be for ever separated.

3. The age and death of Abraham, ver. 7, 8. He lived one hundred seventy-five years; just an hundred years after he came to Canaan: so long he was a sojourner in a strange country. Though he lived long, and lived well, though he did good and could ill be spared, yet he died at last. Observe how his death is here described. 1. He *gave up the ghost*. His life was not extorted from him, but he cheerfully resigned it: into the hands of the father of spirits he committed his spirit. 2. He *died in a good old age, an old man*, so God had promised him. His death was his discharge from the burthens of his age, an old man would not so live always: it was also the crown of the glory of his old age. 3. He was *full of years*; or full of life (as it might be supplied) including all the conveniences and comforts of life. He did not live till the world was weary of him, but till he was weary of the world; he had had enough of it and desired no more, *Vixi quantum satis est. Seneca*. A good man though he should not die old, dies full of days, satisfied with living here, and longing to live in a better place. 4. He *was gathered to his people*. His body was gathered to the congregation of the dead, and his soul to the congregation of the blessed. Note, Death gathers us to our people. Those that are our people while we live, whether the people of God, or the children of this world, to them death will gather us.

4. His burial, ver. 9, 10. Here is nothing recorded of the pomp or ceremony of his funeral, only we are told,

1. Who buried him. *His sons Isaac and Ishmael*, it was the last office of respect they had to pay to their good father. Some distances there had formerly been between Isaac and Ishmael, but it seems either Abraham had himself brought them together while he lived, or at least his death reconciled them.

2. Where they buried him. In his own burying-place which he had purchased, and in which he had buried Sarah. Note, Those that in life have been very dear to each other, may not only innocently but laudably desire to be buried together, that in their deaths they may not be divided, and in token of their hopes of rising together.

11. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac: and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi. 12. Now these are the generations of Ishmael Abrahams son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarahs handmaid, bare unto Abraham. 13. And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The first-born of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Keda, and Adbeel, and Mibsham, 14. And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, 15. Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16. These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. 17. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people. 18. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.

Immediately after the account of Abraham's death, Moses begins the story of Isaac, ver. 11, and tells us where he dwelt, and how remarkably God blessed him. Note, The blessing of Abraham did not die with him, but survived to all the children of the promise. But he presently digresseth from the story of Isaac



to give a short account of Ishmael, for as much as he also was a son of Abraham, and God had made some promises concerning him, which it was requisite we should know the accomplishment of. Observe here what is said,

1. Concerning his children. He had twelve sons, twelve princes they are called, *ver. 16.* Heads of families which in process of time became nations, distinct tribes, numerous and very considerable. They peopled a very large continent that lay between Egypt and Assyria, called Arabia. The names of his twelve sons are recorded. Midian and Kedar, we oft read of in scripture. And some very good expositors have taken notice of the signification of those three names which are put together, *ver. 14.* as containing good advice to us all. Mishma, Dumah, and Massa, that is, hear, keep silence, and bear; we have them together in the same order, *Jam. i. 19. Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.* The posterity of Ishmael had not only tents in the fields, wherein they grew rich in times of peace, but they had towns and castles, *ver. 16.* wherein they fortified themselves in time of war. Now the number and strength of this family was the fruit of the promise made to Hagar concerning Ishmael, *chap. xvi. 10.* and to Abraham, *chap. xvii. 20.—xxi. 13.* Note, Many that are strangers to the covenants of promise, yet are blessed with outward prosperity for the sake of their godly ancestors. *Wealth and riches shall be in their house.*

2. Concerning himself. Here is an account of his age, he lived an hundred and thirty and seven years, *ver. 17.* which is recorded to shew the efficacy of Abraham's prayer for him, *chap. xvii. 18. O that Ishmael might live before thee!* And his death, he also was gathered to his people, but it is not said that he was full of days, tho' he lived to so great an age: he was not so weary of the world, nor so willing to leave it as his good father was. Those words, *he fell in the presence of all his brethren,* where they mean as we take them he died, or, as others, his lot fell, they are designed to shew the fulfilling of that word to Hagar, *chap. xvi. 12. He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren,* i. e. he shall flourish and be eminent among them, and shall hold his own to the last. Or, he died with his friends about him, which is comfortable.

19. And these are the generations of Isaac Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac. 20. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. 21. And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22. And the children struggled together within her: and she said, if it be so, why am I thus? and she went to enquire of the LORD. 23. And the LORD said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. 24. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25. And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment: and they called his name Esau. 26. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. 27. And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents. 28. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

We have here an account of the birth of Jacob and Esau, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah: their entrance into the world was (which was not usual) one of the most considerable parts of their story, nor is much related concerning Isaac, but what had reference to his father while he lived, and to his sons afterward. For Isaac seems not to have been a man of action, nor much tried, but to have spent his days in quietness and silence.

Now concerning Jacob and Esau we are here told,

1. That they were prayed for; their parents after they had been long childless obtained them by prayer, *ver. 20; 21. Isaac was forty years old when he was married,* tho' he was an only son, and from whom the promised seed was to come, yet he made no haste to marry. He was sixty years old when his sons were born, *ver. 26.* so that after he was married he had no child of twenty years. Note, Tho' the accomplishment of God's promise is always sure, yet it is often slow, and seems to be crossed and contradicted by providence: that the faith of believers may be tried, their patience exercised, and mercies long waited for may be the more welcome when they come. While this mercy was delayed Isaac did not approach to a hand-maid's bed, as Abraham had done, and Jacob after, for he loved Rebekah, *chap. xxiv. 67.* But, (1.) He prayed. He intreated the Lord for his wife; tho' God had promised to multiply his family he prayed for it. For God's

promises must not supercede but encourage our prayers, and be improved as the ground of our faith. Tho' he had prayed for this mercy very often, and had continued his supplication many years, and it was not granted, yet he did not leave off praying for it. For men ought *always to pray, and not to faint,* *Luke xviii. 1.* to pray without ceasing, and knock till the door be opened. He prayed for his wife, some read it, with his wife. Note, Husbands and wives should pray together, which is intimated in the apostles caution, that their *prayers be not hindered,* *1 Pet. iii. 7.* The Jews have a tradition, that Isaac at length took his wife with him to mount Moriah, where God had promised that he would multiply Abraham's seed, *chap. xxii. 17.* and there in his prayer with her, and for her, pleaded the promise made in that very place. (2.) God heard his prayer, and was intreated of him. Note, Children are the gift of God: the key of the womb is in his hand. Those that continue instant in prayer as Isaac did, shall find at last they did not *seek in vain,* *Isa. xxx. 18.*

2. That they were prophesied of before they were born, and great mysteries were wrapt up in the prophecies which went before of them, *ver. 22, 23.* Long had Isaac prayed for a son, and now his wife is with child of two, to recompense him for his long waiting. Thus God oft out-doeth our prayers, and gives more than we are able to ask or think. Now Rebekah being with child of these two sons: Observe here,

(1.) How she was perplexed in her mind concerning her present case. *The children struggled together within her.* The commotion she felt was altogether extraordinary, and made her very uneasy; whether she was apprehensive, that the birth would be her death, or that she was weary of the intestine tumult, which probably made her very sick, or that she suspected it to be an ill omen, it seems she was ready to wish that either she had not been with child, or that she might die presently, and not bring forth such a struggling brood. If it be so, or, since it is so, Why am I thus? Before, the want of children was her trouble, now the struggle of the children is no less so. Note, 1. The comforts we are most desirous of are sometimes found to bring along with them more occasion of trouble and uneasiness than we thought of, vanity being written upon all things under the sun, God thus teaches us to read it. 2. We are too apt to be discontented with our comforts, because of the uneasiness that attends them. We know not when we are pleased, neither how to want, nor how to abound.

This struggle between Jacob and Esau in the womb, represents the struggle that is between the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of Satan, (1.) In the world. The seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, have been contending ever since the enmity was put between them, *Gen. iii. 15.* and it has occasioned a constant uneasiness among men, Christ himself came to *send fire on earth, and this division,* *Luke xii. 49, 51.* But let not this be an offence to us. A holy war is better than the peace of the devil's palace. (2.) In the hearts of believers; no sooner is Christ formed in the soul, but presently there begins a conflict between the flesh and spirit, *Gal. v. 17.* The stream is not turned without a mighty struggle, which yet ought not to discourage us. It is better have a conflict with sin than a tame submission to it.

(2.) What course she took for her relief: *She went to enquire of the Lord.* Some think Melchizedek was now consulted as an oracle, or, perhaps some Urim or Teraphim were now used to enquire of God by, as afterwards in the breast-plate of judgment. Note, The word and prayer, by both which we now enquire of the Lord, give great relief to those that are upon any account perplexed: It is a mighty ease to spread our case before the Lord, and ask counsel, at his mouth, *Go into the sanctuary,* *Psal. lxxiii. 17.*

(3.) The information given her upon her enquiry, which expounded the mystery. *Two nations are in thy womb,* *ver. 23.* she was now big, not only with two children, but two nations, which should not only in their manners and dispositions greatly differ from each other, but in their interests clash, and contend, with each other, and the issue of the contest should be, that the elder should serve the younger, which was fulfilled in the subjection of the Edomites for many ages to the house of David, till they revolted, *2 Chron. xxi. 8.* Observe here, 1. That God is a free agent in dispensing his grace: it is his prerogative to make a difference between those who have not as yet themselves done either good or evil. This the apostle infers from hence, *Rom. ix. 12.* 2. That in the struggle between grace and corruption in the soul, grace, the younger, shall certainly get the upper hand at last.

3. That when they were born there was a great difference between them, which served to confirm what had been foretold, *ver. 3.* was a preface of the accomplishment of it, and served greatly to illustrate the type.

1. There was a great difference in their bodies, *ver. 25.* Esau, when he was born, was rough and hairy, as if he had been already a grown man; whence he had his name Esau, made, reared already. This was an indication of a very strong constitution, and gave cause to expect that he would be a very robust daring active man. But Jacob was smooth and tender as other children. Note, (1.) The difference of mens capacities, and consequently of their condition in the world arises very much from the difference



ference of their natural constitution, some are plainly designed by nature for activity and honour, others as manifestly marked for obscurity. This instance of the divine sovereignty in the kingdom of providence, may perhaps help to reconcile us to the doctrine of the divine sovereignty in the kingdom of grace. (2.) It is God's usual way to chuse the weak things of the world, and to pass by the mighty, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

2. There was a manifest contest in their births; Esau the stronger came out first, but Jacob's hand *took hold on his heel*, ver. 26. This signified, 1. Jacob's pursuit of the birth-right and blessing, from the first, he reached forth to have caught hold of it, and, if possible, to have prevented his brother. 2. His prevailing for it at last: that in process of time he should undermine his brother, and gain his point. This passage is referred to *Hof. xii.* 3. and from hence he had his name Jacob; a supplanter.

3. They were very unlike in the temper of their minds, and the way of living they chose, ver. 27. They soon appeared to be of a very different genius. (1.) Esau was a man for this world; a man addicted to his sports, for he was a hunter, and a man that knew how to live by his wits, for he was a cunning hunter: recreation was his business, he studied the art of it, and spent all his time in it. He never loved a book, nor cared for being within doors, but he was a man of the field; like Nimrod and Ishmael, all for the game, and never well but when he was upon the stretch in pursuit of it; in short, he set up for a gentleman, and a soldier. (2.) Jacob was a man for the other world: he was not cut out for a statesman, nor did he affect to look great, but he was a plain man, dwelling in tents: an honest man that always meant well, and dealt fairly, that preferred the true delights of solitude and retirement before all the pretended pleasure of busy noisy sports: he dwelt in tents, either, 1. As a shepherd. He affected that safe and silent employment of keeping sheep, to which also he bred up his children, *Gen. xvi.* 34. Or, (2.) As a student, he frequented the tents of Melchizedek, or Heber, as some understand it, to be taught by them divine things. And this was that son of Isaac, on whom the covenant was entailed.

4. Their interest in the affections of their parents was likewise different. They had but these two children, and it seems one was the father's darling, and the other the mother's, ver. 28. 1. Isaac tho' he was not a stirring man himself, but when he went into the fields, went to meditate and pray, not to hunt, yet he loved to have his son active. Esau knew how to please him, and shewed a great respect for him, by treating him oft with venison, which gained him the affections of the good old man, and won upon him more than one would have thought. 2. Rebekah was mindful of the oracle of God, which had given the preference to Jacob, and therefore she preferred him in her love. And if it be lawful for parents to make a difference between their children upon any account, doubtless Rebekah was in the right that loved him whom God loved.

29. And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint. 30. And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. 31. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birth-right. 32. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birth-right do to me? 33. And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swear unto him: and he sold his birth-right unto Jacob. 34. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birth-right.

We have here a bargain made between Jacob and Esau about the birth-right which was Esau's by providence, but Jacob's by promise. It was a spiritual privilege, including the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power, as well as the double portion, *Gen. xlix.* 3. It seemed to be such a birth-right as had then the blessing annexed to it, and the entail of the promise. Now see,

(1.) Jacob's pious desire of the birth-right, which yet he sought to obtain by indirect courses, not agreeable to his character as a plain man. It was not out of pride or ambition that he coveted the birthright, but with an eye to spiritual blessings, which he had got well acquainted with in his tents, while Esau had lost the scent of them in the field. For this he is to be commended that he coveted earnestly the best gifts, yet in this he cannot be justified, that he took advantage of his brother's necessity to make him a very hard bargain, ver. 31. *Sell me this day thy birth-right.* Probably, there had formerly been some communication between them about this matter, and then it was not so great a surprize upon Esau as here it seems to be; and it may be Esau had sometimes spoke slightly of the birth-right and it's appurtenances, which encouraged Jacob to make this proposal to him. And if so, Jacob is at least excusable in what he did to gain his point. Note, Plain men that have their conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity,

and without worldly wisdom are oft found wisest of all for their souls and eternity. Those are wise indeed that are wise for another world. Jacob's wisdom appeared in two things. (1.) That he nicked his time; took the opportunity when it offered itself, and did not let it slip. (2.) That having made the bargain, he made it sure, and got it confirmed by Esau's oath, *Swear to me this day*, ver. 33. He took Esau when he was in the mind, and would not leave him a power of revocation. In a case of this nature, it is good to be sure.

(2.) Esau's profane contempt of the birth-right, and the foolish sale he made of it. He is called profane Esau for it, *Heb. xii.* 16. because *for one morsel of meat he sold his birth-right*, and as dear a morsel as ever was eaten since the forbidden fruit; and he lived to forethink it when it was too late. Never was there such a foolish bargain as this which Esau now made; and yet he valued himself upon his politics, and had the reputation of a cunning man; and perhaps had oft bantered his brother Jacob as a weak and simple man. Note, There are those that are penny-wise, and pound-foolish, cunning hunters, that can out-wit others, and draw them into their snares, and yet are themselves imposed upon by Satan's wiles, and led captive by him at his will. 2. God often chuses the foolish things of the world, by them to confound the wise. Plain Jacob makes a fool of cunning Esau. Observe the instances of Esau's folly.

1. His appetite was very strong, ver. 29, 30. Poor Jacob had got some bread and pottage, (ver. 34.) for his dinner, and was sitting down to it contentedly enough, without venison, when Esau came from hunting, hungry and weary, and perhaps had caught nothing. And now Jacob's pottage pleased his eye better than ever his game had done: give me (saith he) some of that red, that red, as it is in the original: it suited his own colour, ver. 25. and in reproach to him for this he was ever after called Edom, Red. Nay, it should seem he was so faint that he could not feed himself, nor had he a servant at hand to help him, but bespeaks his brother to feed him. Note, (1.) Those that addict themselves to sport *weary themselves for very vanity*, *Hab. ii.* 15. They might do the most needful business, and gain the greatest advantages with half the pains they take, and half the perils they run in pursuit of their foolish pleasures. (2.) Those that work with quietness are more constantly and comfortably provided for than those that hunt with noise: bread is not always to the wise, but they that trust in the Lord and do good, verily they shall be fed, fed with daily bread; not as Esau, sometimes feasting, and sometimes fainting. (3.) Gratifying the sensual appetite is that which ruins thousands of precious souls: surely if Esau was hungry and fainty he might have got a meal's meat cheaper than at the expence of his birth-right, but that he was unaccountably fond of the colour of this pottage, and could not deny himself the satisfaction of a morsel of it, whatever it cost him. Never better can come of it when mens *hearts walk after their eyes*, *Job xxxi.* 7. and when they serve their own bellies: therefore look not thou upon the wine, or, as Esau upon the pottage; when it is red, when it gives that colour in the cup, in the dish which is most inviting, *Prov. xxiii.* 31. If we use ourselves to deny ourselves we break the force of most temptations.

2. His reasoning was very weak, ver. 32. *Behold, I am at the point to die*; and if he were, would nothing serve to keep him alive but this pottage? If the famine were now in the land (chap. xxvi. 1.) as Dr Lightfoot conjectures, we cannot suppose Isaac so poor, or Rebekah so ill a house-keeper, but that he might have been supplied with food convenient other ways, and might have saved his birthright: but his appetite has the mastery of him, he is in a longing condition, nothing will please him but this red, this red pottage, and to palliate his desire, he pretends he is at the point to die: and if it had been so, was it not better for him to die in honour, than to live in disgrace? Die under a blessing than live under a curse. The birthright was typical of spiritual privileges, those of the church of the first-born: Esau was now tried how he would value those, and he shews himself sensible only of present grievances: may he but get relief against them, he cares not for his birthright. Naboth was better principled who would lose his life rather than sell his vineyard, because his part in the earthly Canaan signified his part in the heavenly, 1 *Kings xxi.* 3. (1.) If we look on Esau's birthright as only a temporal advantage, what he said had something of truth in it, that our worldly enjoyments, even those we are most fond of, will stand us in no stead in a dying hour, *Psal. xlix.* 6, 7, 8. They will not put by the stroke of death, nor ease the pangs, nor remove the sting: yet Esau, who set up for a gentleman should have had a greater and more noble spirit than to sell even such an honour a cheap bargain. (2.) But being of a spiritual nature his undervaluing it was the greatest prophaneity imaginable. Note, It is egregious folly to part with our interest in God, and Christ, and Heaven, for the riches, honours, and pleasures, of this world, as ill a bargain as his that sold a birthright for a dish of broth.

3. Repentance was hid from his eyes, ver. 34. *He did eat and drink*, pleased his palate, and filled his belly, and blessed himself what a good meal's meat he had, and then carelessly rose up and went his way, without any serious reflections upon the ill bargain he had made, or any shew of regret, thus Esau despised his birthright; he used no means at all to get the bargain revoked, made



no appeal to his father about it, nor friends to his brother to compound the matter, but the bargain which his necessity had made (supposing it were so) his prophaneness confirmed *ex post facto*, and by his subsequent neglect and contempt he did, as it were, acknowledge a fine, and by justifying himself in what he had done, he put the bargain past recall. Note, People are ruined, not so much by doing what is amiss, as by doing it and not repenting of it, doing it and standing to it.

## C H A P. XXVI.

*In this chapter we have, 1. Isaac in adversity, by reason of a famine in the land, which, (1.) obliges him to change his quarters, ver. 1. But, (2.) God visits him with direction and comfort, ver. 2—5. (3.) He foolishly denies his wife, being in distress, and is reprov'd for it by Abimelech, ver. 6—11. 2. Isaac in prosperity, by the blessing of God upon him, ver. 12—14. And, 1. The Philistines were envious at him, ver. 14—17. 2. He continued industrious in his business, ver. 18—23. 3. God appeared to him, and encouraged him, and he returned his duty to God, ver. 24, 25. 4. The Philistines at length made court to him, and made a covenant with him, ver. 26—33. 5. The disagreeable marriage of his son Esau, was an alloy to the comfort of his prosperity, ver. 34, 35.*

1. **A**ND there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar. 2. And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt: dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. 3. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father. 4. And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: 5. Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Here, 1. God tried Isaac by his providence: Isaac had been trained up in a believing dependance upon the divine grant of the land of Canaan to him and his heirs; yet now there is a famine in the land, *ver. 1.* what shall he think of the promise, when the promised land will not find him bread? Is such a grant worth accepting upon such terms, and after so long a time? Yes, Isaac will still cleave to the covenant: and the less valuable Canaan in itself seems to be, the better he is taught to value it, (1.) as a token of God's everlasting kindness to him; and, (2.) as a type of Heaven's everlasting blessedness. Note, The intrinsic worth of God's promises cannot be lessened in a believer's eye by any cross providences.

2. He directed him under this trial by his word. Isaac finds himself straitened by the scarcity of provisions, some whither he must go for supply, it should seem he intends for Egypt, whither his father went in the like strait, but he takes Gerar in his way, full of thoughts, no doubt, which way he had best to steer his course, till God graciously appeared to him, and determined him, abundantly to his satisfaction.

1. God bid him stay where he was, and *not go down into Egypt.* *ver. 2, 3.* Sojourn in this land: there was a famine in Jacob's days, and God bid him *go down into Egypt*, Gen. xvi. 3, 4. A famine in Isaac's days, and God bid him *not go down*: a famine in Abraham's days, and God left him to his liberty, directing him neither way, which (considering that Egypt was always a place of trial and exercise to God's people) some ground upon the different characters of these three patriarchs. Abraham was a man of very high attainments, and intimate communion with God, and to him all places and conditions were alike. Isaac a very good man, but not cut out for hardship, therefore he is forbidden to go to Egypt; Jacob enured to difficulties, strong and patient, and therefore he must go down into Egypt; that *the trial of his faith might be to praise, and honour, and glory.* Thus God proportions his people's trials to their strength.

2. He promised to be *with him, and bless him*, *ver. 3.* As we may go any whither with comfort when God's blessing goes with us, so we may stay any where contentedly, if that blessing rest upon us.

3. He renewed the covenant with him, which had so oft been made with Abraham, repeating and ratifying the promises of the land of Canaan, a numerous issue, and the Messiah, *ver. 3, 4.* Note, Those that must live by faith, have need often to review and repeat to themselves the promises they are to live upon, especially when they are called to any instance of suffering or self-denial.

4. He recommended to him the good example of his father's obedience, as that which had preserved the entail of the covenant in his family, *ver. 5.* *Abraham obeyed my voice, do thou do so too,*

and the promise shall be sure to thee. Abraham's obedience is here celebrated to his honour, for by it he obtained a good report both with God and men. A great variety of words is here used to express the divine will, to which Abraham was obedient, *my voice, my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws*; which may intimate, that Abraham's obedience was universal; he obeyed the original laws of nature, the revealed laws of divine worship, particularly that of circumcision, and all the extraordinary precepts God gave him, as that of quitting his country, and that (which some think is more especially referred to) the offering up of his son, which Isaac himself had reason enough to remember. Note, Those only shall have the benefit and comfort of God's covenant with their godly parents that tread in the steps of their obedience.

6. And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 7. And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, she is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she was fair to look upon. 8. And it came to pass when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. 9. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. 10. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. 11. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife, shall surely be put to death.

Isaac has now laid aside all thoughts of going into Egypt, and, in obedience to the heavenly vision, sets up his staff in Gerar, the country in which he was born, *ver. 6.* yet there he enters into temptation, the same temptation that his good father had been once and again surprized and overcome by, *viz.* to deny his wife, and to give out that she was his sister. Observe, (1.) How he *sinned*, *ver. 7.* because his wife was handsome he fancied the Philistines would find some way or other to take him off, that some of them might marry her, and therefore she must pass for his sister. It is an unaccountable thing that both these great and good men should be guilty of so odd a piece of dissimulation, by which they so much exposed, both their own and their wives reputation. But we see, (1.) That very good men have sometimes been guilty of very great faults and follies. Let those therefore that stand take heed lest they fall, and those that are fallen not despair of being helped up again: And, (2.) That there is an aptness in us to imitate even the weaknesses and infirmities of those we have a value for; we have need therefore to keep our foot, lest while we aim to tread in the steps of good men, we sometimes tread in their by-steps. (2.) How he was detected, and the cheat discovered by the king himself; Abimelech, not the same that was in Abraham's days, *chap. xx.* for this was near one hundred years after that, but that was the common name of the Philistine kings, as Cæsar of the Roman emperors: he saw Isaac more familiar and pleasant with Rebekah than he knew he would be with his sister, *ver. 8.* he saw him sporting with her, or laughing, it is the same word with that from which Isaac had his name; he was *rejoycing with the wife of his youth*, Prov. v. 18. It becomes those in that relation to be pleasant with one another, as those that are pleased with one another. No where may a man more allow himself to be innocently merry than with his own wife and children. Abimelech charged him with the fraud, *ver. 9.* shewed him how frivolous his excuse was, and what might have been the ill consequence of it, *ver. 10.* and then to convince him how groundless and unjust his jealousy of them was, took him and his family under his particular protection, forbidding any injury to be done to him or his wife upon pain of death, *ver. 11.* Note, 1. A lying tongue is but for a moment: truth is the daughter of time; and in time it will out. 2. One sin is often the inlet to many, and therefore the beginnings of sin ought to be avoided. 3. The sins of professors shame them before those that are without. 4. God can make those that are incensed against his people, though there may be some colour of cause for it, to know that it is at their peril if they do them any hurt: See *Psal. cv. 14, 15.*

12. Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold, and the LORD blessed him. 13. And the man waxed great, and went forward and grew until he became very great. 14. For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants. And the Philistines envied him. 15. For all the wells which his fathers servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. 16. And Abimelech said



said unto Isaac, Go from us: for thou art much mightier than we. 17. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18. And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. 19. And Isaacs servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. 20. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaacs herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek, because they strove with him. 21. And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22. And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. 23. And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. 24. And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee and multiply thy seed for my servant Abrahams sake. 25. And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaacs servants digged a well.

Here is, 1. The tokens of God's good-will to Isaac, he blessed him and prospered him, and made all that he had to thrive under his hands, (1.) His corn multiplied strangely, *ver. 12.* He had no land of his own, but took land of the Philistines, and sowed it; and (be it observed for the encouragement of poor tenants, that occupy other people's lands, and are honest and industrious) God blessed him with a great increase. He reaped an hundred fold; and there seems to be an emphasis laid upon the time; it was that same year when there was a famine in the land, while others scarce reaped at all, he reaped thus plentifully: See *Isa. lxv. 13. my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry, Psal. xxxvii. 19. in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.* (2.) His cattle also increased, *ver. 14.* And then (3.) he had great store of servants, whom he employed and maintained. Note, *As goods are increased they are increased that eat them, Eccl. v. 11.*

2. The tokens of the Philistines ill-will to him: they envied him, *ver. 14.* It is an instance, 1. Of the vanity of the world, that the more men have of it the more they are envied, and exposed to censure and injury, *Who can stand before envy? Prov. xxvii. 4.* See *Eccl. iv. 4.* 2. Of the corruption of nature, for that is an ill principle indeed which makes men grieve at the good of others; as if it must needs be ill with me because it is well with my neighbour.

1. They had already shewed their ill will to his family, by stopping up the wells which his father had digged, *ver. 15.* This was spitefully done; because they had not flocks of their own to water at these wells, they would not leave them for the use of others; so absurd a thing is malice. And it was perfidiously done, contrary to the covenant of friendship they had made with Abraham, *chap. xxi. 31, 32.* No bonds will hold ill-nature.

2. They expelled him out of their country, *ver. 16, 17.* The king of Gerar began to look upon him with a jealous eye. Isaac's house was like a court, and his riches and retinue eclipsed Abimelech's, and therefore he must go farther off; they were weary of his neighbourhood, because they saw the Lord blessed him, whereas for that reason they should the rather have courted his stay, that they also might be blessed for his sake. Isaac doth not insist upon the bargain he had made with them for the lands he held, his occupying and improvement of them, nor doth he offer to contest with them by force, tho' he was become very great, but very peaceably departs thence farther from the royal city, and perhaps to a part of the country less fruitful. Note, We should deny ourselves both in our rights and in our conveniences rather than quarrel: a wife and good man will rather retire into obscurity like Isaac here into a valley, than sit high to be the butt of envy and ill will.

3. His constancy and continuance in his business still.

1. He kept up his husbandry, and continued industrious to find wells of water, and fit them for his use, *ver. 18, &c.* Though he was grown very rich, yet he was as solicitous as ever about the state of his flocks, and still looked well to his herds; when men grow great they must take heed of thinking themselves too big and too high for their business. Though he was driven from the conveniences he had had, and could not follow his husbandry with the same ease and advantage as before, yet he set himself to make the best of the country he was come into, which it is every man's prudence to do. Observe,

(1.) He opened the wells that his father had digged, *ver. 18.* and, out of respect to his father, called them by the same names that he had given them. Note, In our searches after truth, that fountain of living water, it is good to make use of the discoveries of former ages, which have been clouded by the corruptions of

latter times; enquire for the old way; the wells which our fathers digged, which the adversaries of truth have stopped up, *Ask thine elders and they shall teach thee.*

(2.) His servants digged new wells, *ver. 19.* Note, Though we must use the light of former ages, it doth not therefore follow that we must rest in it, and make no advances; we must still be building upon their foundation, *running to and fro that knowledge may be increased, Dan. xii. 4.*

In digging his wells, 1. He met with much opposition, *ver. 20, 21.* Those that open the fountains of truth must expect contradiction. The two first wells they digged were called Esek and Sitnah, Contention and Hatred. See here, (1.) What is the nature of worldly things; they are make-bates, and occasions of strife. (2.) What is often the lot even of the most quiet and peaceable men in this world. Those that avoid striving, yet cannot avoid being striven with, *Psal. cxx. 7.* In this sense Jeremiah was a man of contention, *Jer. xv. 10.* and Christ himself, though he is a prince of peace. (3.) What a mercy it is to have plenty of water, to have it without striving for it. The more common this mercy is, the more reason we have to be thankful for it. 2. At length he removed to a quiet settlement, sticking to his peaceable principles rather to fly than fight, and unwilling to dwell with them that hated peace, *Psal. cxx. 6.* He preferred quietness before victory, *ver. 22.* he digged a well, and for that they strove not. Note, Those that follow peace, sooner or later, shall find peace: those that study to be quiet seldom fail of being so. How unlike was Isaac to his brother Ishmael, who, right or wrong, would hold what he had against all the world, *chap. xvi. 12.* And which of these would we be found the followers of? This well they called Rehoboth, Enlargements, Room enough: in the two former wells we may see what this earth is, straitness and strife, men cannot thrive for the throng of their neighbours: this well shews us what Heaven is, it is enlargement and peace, room enough there, for there are many mansions.

2. He continued firm to his religion, and kept up his communion with God.

1. God graciously appeared to him, *ver. 24.* when the Philistines expelled him, forced him to remove from place to place, and gave him continual molestation, then God visited him, and gave him fresh assurances of his favour. Note, When men are found false and unkind, we may comfort ourselves that God is faithful and gracious, and his time to shew himself so is when we are most disappointed in our expectations from men. When Isaac was come to Beer-sheba, *ver. 23.* It is probable it troubled him to think of his unsettled condition, and that he could not be suffered to stay long in a place; and in the multitude of these thoughts within him, that same night that he came weary and uneasy to Beer-sheba, God brought him his comforts to delight his soul. Probably he was apprehensive that the Philistines would not let him rest there, *Fear not,* saith God to him, *I am with thee, and will bless thee.* Those may remove with comfort that are sure of God's presence with them wherever they go.

2. He was not wanting in his returns of duty to God, for *there he built an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord, ver. 25.* Note, 1. Wherever we go we must take our religion along with us. Probably Isaac's altars and his religious worship gave offence to the Philistines, and provoked them to be the more troublesome to him, yet he kept up his duty, whatever ill-will he might be exposed to by it. 2. The comforts and encouragements God gives us by his word should excite and quicken us to all instances of devotion, by which God may be honoured, and our intercourse with Heaven maintained.

26. Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar; and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. 27. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? 28. And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; 29. That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD. 30. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. 31. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. 32. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaacs servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. 33. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day.

We have here the contests that had been between Isaac and the Philistines issuing in a happy peace and reconciliation.

1. Abimelech makes a friendly visit to Isaac in token of the respect he had for him, *ver. 26.* Note, *When a man's ways please the*



*the Lord he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him, Prov. xvi. 7. Kings hearts are in his hands, and when he pleaseth he can turn them to favour his people.*

2. Isaac prudently and cautiously questions his sincerity in this visit, *ver. 27.* Note, In settling friendships and correspondences there is need of the wisdom of the serpent as well as the innocency of the dove. Nor is it any transgression of the law of meekness and love, fairly to signify our resentments of injuries received, and to stand upon our guard in dealing with those that have carried it unfairly.

3. Abimelech professeth his sincerity in this address to Isaac, and earnestly courts his friendship, *ver. 28, 29.* Some suggest that Abimelech pressed for this league with him, because he feared lest Isaac, growing rich, should some time or other revenge himself upon them for the injuries he had received. However, he professes to do it from a principle of love rather. (1.) He makes the best of their behaviour towards him; Isaac complained they had *hated him, and sent him away*, no, saith Abimelech, *we sent thee away in peace.* They turned him off from the land he held of them, but they suffered him to take away his stock, and all his effects with him. Note, The lessening of injuries is necessary to the preserving of friendship, for the aggravating of them exasperates and widens breaches. The diskindness done to us might have been worse. (2.) He acknowledges the tokens of God's favour to him, and makes that the ground of their desire to be in league with him: *The Lord is with thee, and thou art the blessed of the Lord, q. d. Be persuaded to overlook and pass by the injuries offered thee, for God has abundantly made up to thee the damage thou receivedest.* Note, Those whom God blesteth and favours have reason enough to forgive those that hate them, since the worst enemy they have cannot do them any real hurt. Or, for this reason we desire thy friendship, because *God is with thee.* Note, It is good to be in covenant and communion with those that are in covenant and communion with God, *1 John i. 3. Zech. viii. 23.*

(3.) He assures him that their present address to him was the result of mature deliberation; *we said, let there be an oath betwixt us;* whatever some of his peevish envious subjects might mean otherwise, he, and his prime ministers of state, whom he had now brought with him, designed no other but a cordial friendship. Perhaps Abimelech had received by tradition the warning God gave to his predecessor not to hurt Abraham, *chap. xx. 7.* and that made him stand in such awe of Isaac, who appeared to be as much the favourite of Heaven as Abraham was.

4. Isaac entertains him and his company, and enter into a league of friendship with him, *ver. 30, 31.* Here see how generous the good man was, (1.) in giving, *he made them a feast,* and bid them welcome, (2.) in forgiving; he did not insist upon the diskindnesses they had done him, but freely entered into a covenant of friendship with them, and bound himself never to do them any injury. Note, Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and as much as in us lies to *live peaceably with all men.*

5. Providence smiled upon what Isaac did, for, the same day that he made this covenant with Abimelech, his servants brought him the tidings of a well of water they had found, *ver. 32, 33.* He had not insisted upon the restitution of the wells which the Philistines had unjustly taken from him, lest that should have broke off the treaty, but sat down silent under the injury, and, to recompense him for that, immediately he is enriched with a new well, which, because it suited so well to the occurrence of the day, he called by an old name, Beer-sheba, The well of the oath.

34. And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: 35. Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

Here is, 1. Esau's foolish marriage, foolish some think in marrying two wives together, for which perhaps he is called a fornicator, *Heb. xii. 16.* or rather in marrying Canaanites, who were strangers to the blessing of Abraham, and subject to the curse of Noah, for which he is called prophane; for hereby he intimated that he neither desired the blessing, nor dreaded the curse of God.

2. The grief and trouble it created to his tender parents. (1.) It grieved them that he married without asking, or at least without taking, their advice and consent: see whose steps those children tread in, who either contemn or contradict their parents indisposing of themselves. (2.) It grieved them that he married to those who had no religion among them, for Isaac knew what was his father's care and mind concerning him, that he should by no means marry a Canaanite. (3.) It should seem the wives he married were provoking in their carriage towards Isaac and Rebekah: those children have little reason to expect the blessing of God, who do that which is a grief of mind to their good parents.

C H A P. XXVII.

*In this chapter we return to the typical story of the struggle between Esau and Jacob: Esau had prophaneely sold the birth-right to Jacob, but Esau hopes he shall be never the poorer, nor Jacob the richer for that bargain, while he preserves his interest in his father's affections, and so secures the blessing: Here therefore we find how he was justly punished for his contempt of the birth-right, which he foolishly deprived himself of, with the loss of the blessing, which Jacob fraudulently deprives him of. Thus story is explained, Heb. xii. 16, 17. Because he sold the birth-right when he would have inherited the blessing he was rejected. For they that make light of the name and profession of religion, and throw away that for a trifle, thereby forfeit the powers and privileges of it. We have here, 1. Isaac's purpose to entail the blessing upon Esau, ver. 1-4. 2. Rebekah's plot to procure it for Jacob, ver. 6-17. 3. Jacob's successful management of the plot, and his obtaining of the blessing, ver. 18-29. 4. Esau's resentment of this. In which, 1. His great importunity with his father to obtain a blessing, ver. 30-40. 2. His great enmity to his brother for defrauding him of the first blessing, ver. 41-46.*

1. **A**ND it came to pass that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: And he said unto him, Behold, here am I. 2. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death. 3. Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; 4. And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. 5. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son: And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

Here is, 1. Isaac's design to make his will, and to declare Esau his heir; the promise of the Messiah, and the land of Canaan was a great trust first committed to Abraham, inclusive and typical of spiritual and eternal blessings; this, by divine direction, he transmitted to Isaac, Isaac being now old, and either not knowing, or not understanding, or not duly considering the divine oracle concerning his two sons, that *the elder should serve the younger;* resolves to entail all the honour and power that was wrapped up in the promise upon Esau his eldest son. In this he was governed more by natural affection, and the common method of settlements than he ought to have been, if he knew (as it is probable he did) the intimations God had given of his mind in this matter. Note, We are very apt to take our measures rather from our own reason than from divine revelation, and thereby often miss our way; we think the wise and learned, the mighty and noble, should inherit the promise, but God sees not as man sees: see *1 Sam. xvi. 6, 7.*

2. The directions he gave to Esau pursuant to this design: he calls him to him, *ver. 1.* for Esau, though married, was not yet removed, and though he had greatly grieved his parents by his marriage; yet they had not expelled him, but it seems were pretty well reconciled to him, and made the best of it. Note, Parents that are justly offended at their children, yet must not be implacable towards them.

He (1.) tells him upon what considerations he resolved to do this now, *ver. 2. I am old,* and therefore must die shortly, yet *I know not the day of my death,* nor when I must die, I will therefore do that at this time which must be done some time. Note, 1. Old people should be minded by the growing infirmities of age to do quickly, and with all the little might they have what their hand finds to do: see *Josh. xiii. 1.* 2. The consideration of the uncertainty of the time of our departure out of the world (which God has wisely kept us in the dark about) should quicken us to do the work of the day in it's day. The heart and the house should both be set and kept in order, because *at such an hour as we think not, the Son of Man comes,* because we know not the day of our death, we are concerned to mind the business of life.

(2.) He bids him to get things ready for the solemnity of executing his last will and testament, by which he designed to make him his heir, *ver. 3, 4.* Esau must go a hunting and bring some venison, which his father will eat of, and then bless him. In this he designed not so much the refreshment of his own spirits, that he might give the blessing in a lively manner, as it is commonly taken; but rather the receiving a fresh instance of his son's filial duty and affection to him, before he bestowed this favour upon him. Perhaps Esau, since he was married, had brought his venison to his wives, and seldom to his father, as formerly, *chap. xxv. 28.* and therefore Isaac before he would bless him, would have him shew this piece of respect to him. Note, It is fit if the *less be blessed of the greater;* that the greater should be served and honoured by the less. Observe, he saith, *that my*



*soul may bless thee before I die.* Note, 1. Prayer is the work of the soul, and not of the lips only; as the soul must be employed in blessing God, *Psal. ciii. 1.* so it must be in blessing ourselves and others: the blessing will not come to the heart if it do not come from the heart. 2. The work of life must be done before we die, for it cannot be done after, *Ecc. ix. 10.* and it is very desirable when we come to die to have nothing else to do but to die. Isaac lived above forty years after this; let none therefore think that they shall die the sooner, for making their wills, and getting ready for death.

6. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob, her son, saying behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, 7. Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. 8. Now therefore my son, obey my voice, according to that which I command thee. 9. Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth. 10. And thou shalt bring it to thy father that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. 11. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. 12. My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. 13. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. 14. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. 15. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son. 16. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck. 17. And she gave the savoury meat, and the bread which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Rebekah is here contriving to procure the blessing for Jacob, which was designed for Esau. And here (1.) the end was good, for she was directed in this intention by the oracle of God, which in dispensing her affections she had been governed by, God had said it should be so, that *the elder should serve the younger*, and therefore Rebekah resolves it shall be so, and cannot bear to see her husband designing to thwart the oracle of God. But (2.) the means were bad, and no way justifiable. If it were not a wrong to Esau, to deprive him of the blessing, he himself having forfeited it by selling the birth-right; yet it was a wrong to Isaac, taking advantage of his infirmity to impose upon him: It was a wrong to Jacob, whom she taught to deceive, by putting a lie into his mouth, or, at least, by putting one into his right hand. It would likewise expose him to endless scruples about the blessing, if he should obtain it thus fraudulently, whether it would stand him or his in any stead, especially if his father should revoke it upon the discovery of the cheat, and plead, as he might, that it was nulled by the *Error Personæ*. And which he himself was aware of the danger of (*ver. 12.*) if he should miss of the blessing, as he might probably have done, he would bring upon himself his father's curse, which he dreaded above any thing, besides, that he laid himself open to that divine curse which is pronounced upon him that *causeth the blind to wander out of the way*, Deut. xxvii. 18. If Rebekah, when she heard Isaac promise the blessing to Esau, at his return from hunting had gone to him, and with humility and seriousness put him in remembrance of that which God had said concerning their sons, if she had farther shewed him how Esau had forfeited the blessing, both by selling his birth-right and by marrying of strange wives, it is probable Isaac would have been prevailed with knowingly and wittingly to have conferred the blessing upon Jacob, and needed not thus to have been cheated into it. This had been honourable and laudable, and would have looked well in the history: but God left her to herself to take this indirect course, that he might have the glory of bringing good out of evil, and of serving his own purposes by the sins and follies of men; and that we might have the satisfaction of God's government of the world according to his will, to his own praise; tho' there is so much wickedness and deceit in it: See *Job xii. 16.* *With him is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceiver are his.* Isaac had lost the sense of seeing which in this case could not have been imposed upon, so admirably well doth providence order the difference of features, that no two faces are exactly alike, conversation and commerce could scarce be maintained, if there were not such a variety: Therefore she endeavours to deceive, (1.) his sense of tasting, by dressing some choice pieces of kid, seasoning it and serving it up so as to make him believe it was venison; which was no hard matter to do. See the folly of those that are nice and curious in their appetite, and take a pride in humouring it. It is easy to impose upon them with that which they

pretend to dislike and dislike, so little perhaps is it's difference from that to which they give a mighty preference. Solomon tells us, that dainties are deceitful meat, for more ways than one it is possible for us to be deceived by them, *Prov. xxiii. 3.* (2.) His sense of feeling and smelling. She put Esau's cloaths upon Jacob, his best cloaths, which it might be supposed Esau would put on, in token of joy, and of respect to his father, when he was to receive the blessing, those Isaac knew by the stuff, shape, and smell of, to be Esau's. If we would obtain a blessing from our heavenly Father, we must come for it in the garments of our elder brother, clothed with his righteousness, who is the *first-born among many brethren*. Lest the smoothness and softness of Jacob's hands and neck should betray him, she covered them, and probably part of his face with their skins of the kids that were newly killed, *ver. 16.* Esau was rough indeed when nothing less than these would serve to make Jacob like him. Those that affect to seem rough and rugged in their carriage, put the beast upon the man, and really shame themselves by thus disguising themselves. And (lastly) it was a very rash word which Rebekah spake when Jacob objected the danger of a curse, *upon me be the curse, my son*, *ver. 13.* Christ indeed, who is mighty to save, because mighty to bear, hath said, *upon me be the curse, only obey my voice*; he has born the burthen of the curse, the curse of the law, for all those that will take upon them the yoke of the command, the command of the gospel. But it is too daring for any creature to say, *upon me be the curse*, unless it be that *curse causeless*, which we are sure *shall not come* *Prov. xxvi. 2.*

18. And he came unto his father, and said, My father, and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19. And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me. 21. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau, or not. 22. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father, and he felt him; and said, The voice is Jacobs voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 24. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? and he said, I am. 25. And he said, bring it near to me, and I will eat of my sons venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me my son. 27. And he came near and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son, is as the smell of a field, which the LORD hath blessed. 28. Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. 29. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mothers sons bow down to thee, cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be he that bleisseth thee.

Observe here 1. The art and assurance with which Jacob managed this intrigue; who would have thought this plain man could have plaid his part so well in a design of this nature? His mother having put him in the way of it, and encouraged him in it, he dexterously applies himself to those methods which he had never accustomed himself to, but had always conceived an abhorrence of. Note, Lying is soon learned. The Psalmist speaks of those, who, *as soon as they be born, speak lies*, *Psal. lviii. 3.* Jer. ix. 5. I wonder how honest Jacob could so readily turn his tongue to say, *ver. 19.* *I am Esau thy first-born*; nor do I see how the endeavour, of some to bring him off with that equivocation, *I am made thy first-born*, viz. by purchase, do him any service, for when his father asked him, *ver. 24.* *Art thou my very son Esau?* He said, *I am*. How could he say, *I have done as thou biddest me*, when he had received no command from his father, but was doing as his mother bid him? How could he say, *eat of my venison*, when he knew it came not from the field, but from the fold? But especially I wonder how he could have the fore-head to father it upon God, and to use his name in the cheat, *ver. 20.* *The Lord thy God brought it to me.* Is this Jacob? Is this Israel indeed without guile? It is certainly written not for our imitation, but our admonition. *Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* Good men have sometimes failed in the exercise of those graces which they have been most eminent for. 2. The success of this management; Jacob, with some difficulty, gained his point, and got the blessing.



(1.) Isaac was at first dissatisfied, and had discovered the fraud, if he could have trusted his own ears, for *the voice was Jacob's voice*, ver. 22. Providence has ordered a strange variety of voices as well as faces, which is also of use to prevent our being imposed upon; and the voice is a thing not easily disguised, or counterfeited. This may be alluded to, to illustrate the character of an hypocrite; his voice is Jacob's voice, but his hands are Esau's: he speaks the language of a saint, but doth the works of a sinner; but the judgment will be (as here) by the hands.

(2.) At length he yielded to the power of the cheat, *because the hands were hairy*, ver. 23. not considering how easy it was to counterfeit that; and now Jacob carries it on cleverly enough; sets his venison before his father; and waits at table very officiously, till dinner is done, and the blessing comes to be pronounced in the close of this solemn feast. That which excuseth both Rebekah and Jacob in this fraud, is, that it was not so much to hasten the fulfilling, as to prevent the thwarting of the oracle of God: the blessing was just going to be put upon the wrong head, and it was time to bestir themselves.

Now let us see how Isaac gave Jacob his blessing.

1. *He kissed him*, ver. 26. in token of a particular affection to him. Those that are blessed of God, are kissed with the kisses of his mouth, and they do by love and loyalty *kiss the son*, Psal. ii. 12.

2. *He praised him*, ver. 27. upon occasion of the sweet smell of his garments, he said, *See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed*, i. e. like that of the most fragrant flowers and spices. It appeared that God had blessed him, and therefore Isaac will bless him, compare, ver. 28.

3. *He prayed for him*, and therein prophesied concerning him. It is parents duty to pray for their children, and to bless them in the name of the Lord. And thus as well as by their baptism, to do what they can to preserve and perpetuate the entail of their covenant in their families. But this was an extraordinary blessing; and providence so ordered it, that Isaac should bestow it upon Jacob ignorantly, and by mistake, that it might appear he was beholden to God for it, and not to Isaac. Three things Jacob is here blessed with, (1.) Plenty, ver. 28. Heaven and earth concurring to make him rich. (2.) Power, ver. 29. particularly dominion over his brethren, viz. Esau and his posterity. (3.) Prevalency with God, and a great interest in Heaven, *Cursed be every one that curseth thee*. Let God be a friend to all thy friends, and an enemy to all thine enemies. Now certainly more is comprized in this blessing than appears, *prima facie*; it must amount to an entail of the promise of the Messiah, and the church: that was in the patriarchal dialect *the blessing*; something spiritual doubtless is included in it.

(1.) That from him should come the Messiah that should have a sovereign dominion on earth. It was that top branch of his family whom people should serve, and nations bow down to: see *Numb. xxiv. 19. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion*, the *Star and Sceptre*, ver. 17. Jacob's dominion over Esau was to be only typical of this, *Gen. xlix. 10*.

(2.) That from him should come the church that should be particularly owned and favoured by Heaven. It was part of the blessing of Abraham, when he was first called to be the father of the faithful, *Gen. xii. 3. I will bless them that bless thee*; therefore when Isaac afterwards confirmed the blessing to Jacob, he called it the blessing of Abraham, *Gen. xxviii. 4*. Balaam explains this too, *Numb. xxiv. 9*. Note, It is the best and most desirable blessing to stand in relation to Christ and his church, and to be interested in Christ's power, and the churches favours.

30. And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father; and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his sons venison, that thy soul may bless me. 32. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said I am thy son, thy first-born Esau. 33. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who, where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. 34. and when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. 35. And he said thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. 36. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birth-right: and behold now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? 37. And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son? 38. And Esau said unto

his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lift up his voice, and wept. 39. And Isaac his father answered, and said unto him, Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. 40. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt brake his yoke from off thy neck.

Here is, 1. the *covenant-blessing* denied to Esau. Now he that made so light of the birth-right, *would have inherited the blessing, but he was rejected, and found no place of repentance* in his father, *though he sought it carefully with tears*, Heb. xii. 17. Observe, (1.) *How carefully he sought it*. He prepared the savoury meat, as his father had directed him, and then begged the blessing which his father had encouraged him to expect, ver. 31. when he understood that Jacob had got it surreptitiously, he *cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry*, ver. 34. No man could have laid the disappointment more to heart than he did; he made his father's tent to ring of his grief, and again, ver. 38, *lift up voice and wept*. Note, The day is coming when those that now makelight of the blessings of the covenant, and sell their title to them for a thing of nought, will, in vain, be importunate for them. Those that will not so much as ask and seek now, will knock shortly, and cry, *Lord, Lord*. Slighters of Christ will then be humble suitors to him. (2.) *How he was rejected*. Isaac, when first he was aware how he had been imposed upon, *trembled exceedingly*, ver. 33. Those that follow the choice of their own affections, rather than the dictates of the divine will, involve themselves in such perplexities as these. But he soon recovers himself, and ratifies the blessing he had given to Jacob, *I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed*; he might, upon very good grounds, have recalled it, but now at last he is sensible he was in an error when he designed it for Esau. Either himself recollecting the divine oracle, or rather having found himself more than ordinarily filled with the holy Ghost when he gave the blessing to Jacob, he perceived that God did as it were say amen to it.

Now, (1.) Jacob was hereby confirmed in his possession of the blessing, and abundantly satisfied in the validity of it, though he obtained it fraudulently; and had reason to hope that God graciously over-looked and pardoned his mismanagement.

(2.) Isaac hereby acquiesced in the will of God, though it contradicted his own apprehension and affection: He had a mind to give Esau the blessing, but when he perceived the will of God was otherwise, he submitted; and this he did by faith, *Heb. xi. 20. as Abraham before him, when he had solicited for Ismael. May not God do what he will with his own?*

(3.) Esau hereby was cut off from the expectation of that special blessing, which he thought to have preserved to himself when he sold his birth-right: And we, by this instance, are taught, 1. That *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy*, Rom. ix. 16. He seems to allude to this story. Esau had a good will to the blessing, and run for it; but God that shewed mercy designed it for Jacob, that *the purpose of God according to election might stand*, ver. 11. The Jews, like Esau, *hunted after the law of righteousness*, ver. 31. yet missed of the blessing of righteousness, *because they sought it by the works of the law*, ver. 32. while the Gentiles who, like Jacob, sought it by faith in the oracle of God obtained it by force, with that violence which the kingdom of Heaven suffers: See *Matth. xi. 12*. 2. That those who under-value their spiritual birth-right, and can afford to sell it for a morsel of meat, forfeit spiritual blessings, and it is just with God to deny them those favours they were careless of. Those that will part with their wisdom and grace, with their faith and a good conscience, for the honours, wealth, or pleasures of this world, however, they pretend a zeal for the blessing, have already judged themselves unworthy of it, and so shall their doom be. (3.) Those who lift up hands in wrath, lift them up in vain. Esau, instead of repenting of his own folly, reproached his brother, unjustly charged him with *taking away the birth-right*, which he had fairly sold to him, ver. 36. and conceived malice against him for what he had now done, ver. 41. Those are not likely to speed in prayer, who turn in those repentments upon their brethren which they should turn upon themselves; and lay the blame of their miscarriages upon others, when they should take shame to themselves. 4. Those who seek not till it is too late, will be rejected. This was the ruin of Esau, he did not come in time: As there is an accepted time, a time when God will be found, so there is a time when he will not answer those that call upon him because they slipt their season: See *Prov. i. 28*. The time of God's patience, and our probation, will not last always, the day of grace will come to an end, and the door be shut: Then many that now despise the blessing, will seek it carefully, for then they will know how to value it, and will see themselves undone, for ever undone without it, but to no purpose, *Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27*. O that we would therefore in this our day *know the things that belong to our peace*.

2. Here is a common blessing bestowed upon Esau.



1. This he desired: *Bless me also*, ver. 34. *Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?* ver. 36. (Note, 1.) The worst of men know how to wish well to themselves, and even those who prophaneely sell their birth-right, seem piously to desire the blessing: feint desires of happiness, without a right choice of the end, and a right use of the means deceive many into their own ruin: Multitudes go to hell with their mouths full of good wishes. The desire of the slothful and unbelieving kills them. Many will seek to enter in as Esau, who shall not be able because they do not strive, *Luke* xiii. 24. It is the folly of the most of men, that they are willing to take up with any good, *Psal.* iv. 6. as Esau here, who desired but a second rate blessing, a blessing separated from the birth-right. Prophane hearts think any blessing as good as that from God's oracle: *Hast thou but one?* q. d. I will take up with any: Though I have not the blessing of the church, yet let me have some blessing.

2. This he had; and let him make his best of it, ver. 39, 40. 1. It was a good thing, and better than he deserved. It was promised him, 1. That he should have a competent livelihood; *the fatness of the earth, and the dew of heaven*. Note, Those that come short of the blessings of the covenant, may yet have a very good share of outward blessings. God gives good ground and good weather to many that reject his covenant, and have no part or lot in it. 2. That by degrees he should recover his liberty; if Jacob must rule, (ver. 29.) Esau must serve: But he has this to comfort him, he shall live by his sword; he shall serve, but he shall not starve; and at length after much picquering, he shall break the yoke of bondage, and wear the marks of freedom. This was fulfilled, *2 King.* viii. 20, 22. when the Edomites revolted.

2. Yet it was far short of Jacob's blessing, for him God had reserved some better thing, (1.) In *Jacob's blessing the dew of heaven* is put first, as that which he most valued and desired, and depended upon; in *Esau's the fatness of the earth* is put first, for that was it which he had the first and principal regard to. (2.) Esau hath these, but Jacob hath them from God's hand. *God gives thee the dew of Heaven*, ver. 28. It was enough to Esau to have the possession, but Jacob desired it by promise, and to have it from covenant-love. (3.) Jacob shall have dominion over his brethren, for the Israelites oft ruled over the Edomites, Esau shall have dominion, i. e. he shall gain some power and interest, but shall never have dominion over his brother; we never find that the Jews were sold into the hands of the Edomites, or that they oppressed them. But the great difference, is, that there is nothing in Esau's blessing that points at Christ, nothing that brings him or his into the church and covenant of God, and without that the fatness of the earth, and the plunder of the field, will stand him in little stead. Thus Isaac by faith blessed them both according as their lot should be. Some observe that Jacob was blessed with a kiss, ver. 27. so was not Esau.

41. And Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob. 42. And these words of Esau her elder son, were told to Rebekah: And she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. 43. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran. 44. And tarry with him a few days, until thy brothers fury turn away. 45. Until thy brothers anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? 46. And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

Here is, 1. The malice Esau bore to Jacob upon the account of the blessing which he had obtained, ver. 41. Thus he went in the way of Cain, who therefore slew his brother because he had gained that acceptance with God which he had rendered himself unworthy of. Esau's hatred of Jacob was, (1.) A causeless hatred; he hated him for no other reason, but because his father blessed him, and God loved him. Note, The happiness of saints is the envy of sinners. Whom Heaven blesses hell curseth. (2.) It was a cruel hatred; nothing less would satisfy him than to slay his brother. It is the blood of the saints that persecutors thirst after. *I will slay my brother*; How could he say that word without horror? Call him brother, and yet vow his death. Note, The rage of persecutors will not be tied up by any bonds, no not the strongest, and most sacred. (3.) It was a politic hatred; he expected his father would be dead quickly, and then titles must be tried and interest contested between the brothers, which would give him a fair opportunity for revenge. He thinks it not enough to live by his sword himself, ver. 40, unless his brother die by it.

He is loth to grieve his father while he lives, and therefore puts off the intended murder till his death, not caring how much he then grieved his surviving mother. Note, (1.) Those are ill children to whom their good parents are a burthen, and who upon any account long for the days of mourning for them. (2.) Bad men are long held in by external restraints from doing the mischief they would do, and so their wicked purposes come to nought. (3.) Those who think to defeat God's purposes will undoubtedly be disappointed themselves. Esau aimed to prevent Jacob, or his seed, from having the dominion, by taking away his life before he was married; but who can disannul what God has spoken? Men may fret at God's counsels but cannot change them.

2. The method Rebekah took to prevent the mischief.

1. She gave Jacob warning of his danger, and advised him to withdraw for a while, and shift for his own safety. She tells him what she heard of Esau's design, that he comforted himself with the hopes of an opportunity to kill his brother, ver. 42. would one think that such a bloody barbarous thought as this could be a comfort to a man? If Esau could have kept his design to himself, his mother had not suspected it: but mens impudence in sin is oft their infatuation; and they cannot accomplish their wickedness, because their rage is too violent to be concealed, and a bird of the air carries the voice. Observe here, (1.) What Rebekah feared; lest she should be deprived of them both in one day, ver. 45. not only of the murdered, but of the murderer, who, either by the magistrate, or by the immediate hand of God, would be sacrificed to justice; which she herself must acquiesce in, and not obstruct: or, if not so, yet from thenceforward she would be deprived of all joy and comfort in him. Those that are lost to virtue, are in a manner lost to all their friends. With what pleasure can a child be looked upon, that can be looked upon as no other but a child of the devil. (2.) What Rebekah hoped. That if Jacob for a while kept out of sight, the affront which his brother resented so heinously, would by degrees go out of mind. The strength of passions is weakened and taken off by the distances both of time and place. She promised herself, that his brother's anger would turn away. Note, Yielding pacifies great offences; and even those that have a good cause and God on their side, yet must use that with other prudent expedients for their own preservation.

2. She possessed Isaac with an apprehension of the necessity of Jacob's going among her relations upon another account, which was to get him a wife, ver. 46. She would not tell him of Esau's wicked design against the life of Jacob, lest it should trouble him; but prudently took another way to gain her point. Isaac was as uneasy as she was at Esau's being unequally yoked with Hittites; and therefore with a very good colour of reason, she moves to have Jacob married to one that was better principled. Note, one miscarriage should serve as a warning to prevent another; those are careless indeed that stumble twice at the same stone: Yet Rebekah seems to have expressed herself somewhat too warmly in the matter when she said, *what good will my life do me if Jacob marry a Canaanite?* For thanks be to God all our comfort is not lodged in one hand; we may do the work of life, and enjoy the comforts of life, tho' every thing do not fall out to our mind, and though our relations be not in all respects agreeable to us. Perhaps Rebekah spoke with this concern, because she saw it necessary for the quickening of Isaac to give speedy orders in this matter. Observe, Though Jacob was himself very towardsly, and well fixed in his religion, yet he has need to be put out of the way of temptation. Even he was in danger both of following the ill example of his brother, and of being drawn into a snare by it. We must not presume too far upon the wisdom and resolution, no not of those children that are most hopeful and promising, but care must be taken to keep them out of harm's way.

## C H A P. XXVIII.

We have here (1.) *Jacob's parting with his parents to go to Padan-aram; the charge his father gave him*, ver. 1, 2. *The blessing he sent him away with*, ver. 3, 4. *His obedience to the orders given him*, ver. 5—10. *And the influence this had upon Esau*, ver. 6. (2.) *Jacob's meeting with God, and his communion with him by the way*. And there, 1. *His vision of the ladder*, ver. 11, 12. 2. *The gracious promises God made him*, ver. 13, 14, 15. 3. *The impression this made upon him*, ver. 16—19. 4. *The vow he made to God upon this occasion* ver. 20, 21, 22.

1. **A**ND Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mothers father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mothers brother. 3. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: 4. And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit a land wherein



wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. 5. And Isaac sent away Jacob, and he went to Padan-aram, unto Laban son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacobs and Esaus mother.

Jacob had no sooner obtained the blessing, but immediately he was forced to run his country; and, as if it were not enough, that he was a stranger and a sojourner there, he must go to be more so, and no better than an exile in another country. Now *Jacob fled into Syria*, Hof. xii. 12. He was blessed with *plenty of corn and wine*, and yet he goes away poor: was blessed with government, and yet goes out to service, a hard service. This was, 1. Perhaps to correct him for his dealing fraudulently with his father. The blessing shall be confirmed to him, and yet he shall smart for the indirect course he takes to obtain it. While there is such an allay as there is of sin in our duties, we must expect an allay of trouble in our comforts. However, 2. It was to teach us, that they who inherit the blessing must expect persecution. Those that have peace in Christ, *in the world shall have tribulation*, John xvi. 33. We must neither think it strange, being told of it before, nor think it hard, being assured of a recompence for it hereafter. We may observe likewise, that God's providences often seem to contradict his promises, and to go cross to them; and yet when the mystery of God shall be finished we shall see that all was for the best, and that cross providences did but render the promises and the accomplishment of them the more illustrious.

Now Jacob is here dismissed by his father,

1. With a solemn charge, ver. 1, 2. *He blessed him, and charged him*. Note, Those that have the blessing must keep the charge annexed to it, and not think to separate what God has joined. The charge is like that, 2 Cor. vi. 14. *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers*; and all that inherit the promises of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, must keep this charge which follows those promises, *Save yourselves from the untoward generation*, Acts ii. 38, 39, 40. Those that are intitled to peculiar favours must be a peculiar people. If Jacob be an heir of promise, he must *not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan*; those that profess religion should not marry with those that are irreligious.

2. With a solemn blessing, ver. 3, 4. He had before blessed him unwittingly, now he doth it designedly, for the greater encouragement of Jacob in that melancholy condition to which he was now removing. This blessing is more express and full than the former; it is an entail of *the blessing of Abraham*, that blessing which was poured on the head of Abraham like the anointing oil, thence to run down to his chosen seed, as the skirts of his garments. It is a gospel blessing, the blessing of church privileges, that is the *blessing of Abraham which comes upon the gentiles through faith*, Gal. iii. 14. It is a blessing from God Almighty, by which name God appeared to the patriarchs, *Exod. vi. 3*. Those are blessed indeed whom God Almighty blesteth, for he commands and effects the blessing. Two great promises Abraham was blessed with, and Isaac here entails them both upon Jacob.

(1.) The promise of heirs, ver. 3. *God make thee fruitful and multiply thee*, (1.) Thro' his loins that people should descend from Abraham, which should be numerous as the stars of Heaven, and the sand of the sea, and which should increase more than the rest of the nations, so as to be an assembly of people, as the margin reads it. And never was such a multitude of people so often gathered into one assembly as the tribes of Israel were in the wilderness and afterwards. (2.) Through his loins should descend from Abraham that person in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, and to whom the gathering of the people should be. Jacob was in him a multitude of people indeed, for all things in Heaven and earth are united in Christ, *Eph. i. 10*, all center in him, that corn of wheat which falling to the ground produced much fruit, *Job. xii. 24*.

(2.) The promise of an inheritance, for those heirs, ver. 4. *that thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings*. Canaan was hereby entailed upon the seed of Jacob, exclusive of the seed of Esau. Isaac was now sending Jacob away into a distant country, to settle there for some time, and lest this should look like disinheriting him, he here confirms the settlement of it upon him, that he might be assured that the discontinuance of his possession should be no defeasance of his right. Observe, he is here told that he should inherit the land wherein he sojourned. Those that are sojourners now shall be heirs for ever: and even now those do most inherit the earth (tho' they do not inherit most of it) that are most as strangers in it. Those have the best enjoyment of present things that sit most loose to them. This promise looks as high as Heaven, of which Canaan was a type. That was the better country which Jacob, with other the patriarchs, had in his eye when he *confessed himself a stranger and pilgrim on the earth*, Heb. xi. 16.

Jacob having taken leave of his father was hastened away with all speed, lest his brother should find an opportunity to do him a mischief, and away he went to Padan-aram, ver. 5. How unlike was his taking a wife from thence to his father's. Isaac had servants and camels sent to fetch his, Jacob must go himself, go

alone, and go afoot to fetch his; and go away in a fright from his father's house, not knowing when he might return. Note, If God in his providence disable us, we must be content, tho' we cannot keep up the state and grandeur of our ancestors. We should be more in care to maintain their piety than to maintain their port, and to be as good as they than to be as great. Rebekah is here called Jacob's and Esau's mother; Jacob is named first, not only because he had always been his mother's darling, but because he was now made his father's heir, and Esau was post-poned. Note, The time will come when piety will have precedency, whatever it has now.

6. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 7. And that Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram. 8. And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father. 9. Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abrahams son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

This passage concerning Esau comes in, in the midst of Jacob's story, either, 1. To shew the influence of a good example. Esau, tho' the bigger man, now begins to think Jacob the better man, and disdains not to take him for his pattern in this particular instance of marrying with a daughter of Abraham. The elder children should give to the younger an example of tractableness and obedience, it is bad if they do not, but it mends the matter pretty well if they take the example of it from them, as Esau here did from Jacob. Or, 2. To shew the folly of an after-wit; Esau did well, but he did it when it was too late. He *saw that the daughters of Canaan pleased not his father*, and might he not have seen that long ago, if he had consulted his father's judgment as much as he did his palate? And how he did now mend the matter? Why truly, so as to make ill worse. 1. He married a daughter of Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, who was cast out, and was not to inherit with Isaac and his seed, thus joining with a family which God had rejected, and seeking to strengthen his own pretensions by the aids of another pretender. 2. He took a third wife, while, for ought appears, his other two were neither dead nor divorced. 3. He did it only to please his father, not to please God; now Jacob was sent into a far country, Esau would be all in all at home, and he hoped so to humour his father as to prevail with him to make a new will, and entail the promise upon him, revoking the settlement lately made upon Jacob. And thus, (1.) he was wise when it was too late, like Israel that would venture when the decree was gone forth against them, *Num. xiv. 40*. and the foolish virgins, *Matth. xxv. 10*. (2.) He rested in a partial reformation, and thought by pleasing his parents in one thing to atone for all his other miscarriages. It is not said, that when he saw how obedient Jacob was, and how willing to please his parents, he repented of his malicious design against him; no, it appeared afterwards that he persisted in that, and retained his malice. Note, Carnal hearts are apt to think themselves as good as they should be, because perhaps in some one particular instance they are not so bad as they have been. Thus Micah retains his idols, but thinks himself happy in having a Levite to be his priest, *Judg. xvii. 13*.

10. And Jacob went out from Beerseba, and went toward Haran. 11. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13. And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. 14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

We have here Jacob upon his journey towards Syria, in a very desolate condition, like one that was sent to seek his fortune; but we find, that tho' he was alone, yet he was not alone, for *the Father was with him*, John xvi. 22. If this here recorded happened



pened (as it should seem it did) the first night, he had made a long day's journey from Beer-sheba to Beth-el, above forty miles; providence brought him to a convenient place; probably shaded with trees, to rest him in that night; and there he had,

1. A hard lodging, ver. 11: the *stones for his pillow*, and the Heavens for his canopy and curtains. As the usage then was, perhaps this was not so bad as it seems now to us, but we would think, (1.) He lay very cold, the cold ground for his bed, and which one would think made the matter worse, a cold stone for his pillow, and in the cold air. (2.) Very uneasy, if his bones were fore with his day's journey; his night's rest would but make them forer. (3.) Very much exposed; he forgot that he was fleeing for his life, for had his brother in his rage pursued, or sent a murderer after him, here he lay ready to be sacrificed, and destitute of shelter and defence; we cannot think it was by reason of his poverty that he was so ill accommodated, but, (1.) It was owing to the plainness and simplicity of those times, when men did not take so much state, and consult their ease so much as in these later times of softness and effeminacy. (2.) Jacob had been particularly used to hardships, as a plain man dwelling in tents, and designing now to go to service, he was the more willing to enure himself to it. And, as it proved, it was well, chap. xxxi. 40. (3.) His comfort in the divine blessing, and his confidence in the divine protection made him easy, even then when he lay thus exposed; being sure that his God made him to dwell in safety, he could lie down and sleep upon a stone.

2. A pleasant dream he had in his hard lodging; and any Israelite indeed would be willing to take up with Jacob's pillow, provided he might but have Jacob's dream. Then and there he *heard the words of God, and saw the visions of the Almighty*: it was the best night's sleep he ever had in his life. Note, God's time to visit his people with his comforts is, when they are most destitute of other comforts, and other comforters: when afflictions in the way of duty (as these here were) do abound, then shall consolations so much the more abound. Now observe here,

1. The encouraging vision Jacob saw, ver. 12. He saw a ladder which reached from earth to Heaven, the angels ascending and descending upon it, and God himself at the head of it. Now this represents the two things that are very comfortable to good people at all times, and in all conditions.

(1.) The providence of God, by which there is a constant correspondence kept up between Heaven and earth. The counsels of Heaven are executed on earth, and the actions and affairs of this earth are all known in Heaven, and judged there. Providence doth it's work gradually, and by steps; angels are employed as ministering spirits to serve all the purposes and designs of providence, and the wisdom of God is at the upper end of the ladder, directing all the motions of second causes to the glory of the first cause. The angels are active spirits, continually ascending and descending; they rest not day nor night from service, according to the posts assigned them. They ascend to give account of what they have done, and to receive orders, and then descend to execute the orders they have received. Thus we should *always abound in the work of the Lord*, that we may do it as the angels do it, *Psal. ciii. 20, 21.* This vision gave very seasonable comfort to Jacob, letting him know, that he had both a good guide and a good guard, in his going out and coming in; that tho' he was made to *wander from his father's house*, yet still he was the care of a kind providence, and the charge of the holy angels. This is comfort enough, tho' we should not admit the notion which some have that the tutelar angels of Canaan were ascending, having guarded Jacob out of their land, and the angels of Syria descending to take him into their custody. Jacob was now the type and representative of the whole church; which the angels are intrusted with the guardianship of.

2. The mediation of Christ: he is this ladder, the foot on earth in his human nature, the top in Heaven in his divine nature: or, the former in his humiliation, the latter in his exaltation. All the intercourse between Heaven and earth, since the fall, is by this ladder. Christ is the way: all God's favours come to us, and all our services come to him by Christ. If God dwell with us, and we with him, it is by Christ: we have no way of getting to Heaven but by this ladder; if we climb up any other way, we are thieves and robbers. This vision our Saviour alludes to, when he speaks of the angels of God *ascending and descending upon the son of man*, John i. 51. for the kind offices the angels do us, and the benefits we receive by their administration, are all owing to Christ, who hath reconciled things on earth, and things in Heaven, *Col. i. 20.* and made them all meet in himself, *Eph. i. 10.*

2. The encouraging words Jacob heard: God now *brought him into the wilderness, and spake comfortably to him*; spake from the head of the ladder, for all the glad tidings we receive from Heaven comes thro' Jesus Christ.

1. The former promises made to his father, are repeated, and ratified to him, ver. 13, 14. In general, God intimates to him, that he would be the same to him that he had been to Abraham and Isaac. Those that tread in the steps of their godly parents are interested in their covenant, and intitled to their privileges. Particularly, (1.) The land of Canaan is settled upon him, the

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land whereon thou liest; as if by his lying so contentedly upon the bare ground, he had taken livery and seisin of the whole land.

(2.) It is promised him, that his posterity should multiply exceedingly, as the dust of the earth, that tho' he seemed now to be plucked off as a withered branch, yet he should become a flourishing tree that should send out his boughs unto the sea. These were the blessings wherewith his father had blessed him, ver. 3, 4. and God here said *Amen* to them, that he might have strong consolation. (3.) It is added, that the Messiah should come from his loins, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed: Christ is the great blessing of the world: all that are blessed, whatever family they are of, are blessed in him, and none of any family are excluded from blessedness in him, but those that exclude themselves.

2. Fresh promises were made him, accommodated to his present condition, ver. 15. (1.) Jacob was apprehensive of danger from his brother Esau; but God promiseth to keep him. Note, Those are safe whom God protects, whoever pursues them. (2.) He had now a long journey before him, was to travel alone, in an unknown road, to an unknown country, but *behold I am with thee*, saith God. Note, Wherever we are we are safe, and may be easy if we have God's favourable presence with us. (3.) He knew not, but God foresaw what hardships he would meet with in his uncle's service, and therefore promiseth to preserve him in all places. Note, God knows how to give his people graces and comforts accommodated to the events that shall be as well as to those that are. (4.) He was now going as an exile into a place far distant, but God promiseth him to bring him back again to this land. Note, He that preserves his people's going out, will also take care of their coming in, *Psal. cxxi. 8.* (5.) He seemed to be forsaken of all his friends, but God here gives him this assurance, *I will not leave thee*. Note, Whom God loves he never leaves. This promise is *sure to all the seed*, Heb. xiii. 5. (6.) Providences seemed to contradict the promises, he is therefore assured of the performance of them in their season: all shall be done that I have spoken to thee of. Note, Saying and doing are not two things with God; whatever they are with us.

16. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said; Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place? this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19. And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on. 21. So that I come again to my fathers house in peace: then shall the Lord be my God. 22. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be Gods house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

God manifested himself and his favour to Jacob when he was asleep and purely passive, for the spirit like the wind blows when and where he listeth, and God's grace like the dew *tarrieth not for the sons of men*, Mic. v. 7. But Jacob applied himself to the improvement of the visit God had made him, when he was awake; and we may well think he awaked, as the prophet did, *Jer. xxxi. 26.* and behold *his sleep was sweet to him*. Here is much of Jacob's devotion on this occasion.

1. He expresses a great surprize at the tokens he had of God's special presence with him in that place, ver. 16. *Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.* Note, 1. God's manifestations of himself to his people carry their own evidence along with them. God can give undeniable demonstrations of his presence, such as give abundant satisfaction to the souls of the faithful, that God is with them of a truth; satisfaction not communicable to others, but convincing to themselves. 2. We sometimes meet with God there, where we little thought of meeting with him. He is there, where we did not think he had been, is found there where we asked not for him. No place excludes divine visits, *Gen. xvi. 13.* here also. Wherever we are in the city, or, in the desert; in the house, or, in the field; in the shop, or, in the street; we may keep up our intercourse with Heaven, if it be not our own fault.

2. It struck an awe upon him, ver. 17. *He was afraid*; so far was he from being puffed up, and *exalted above measure with the abundance of the revelations*, (2 Cor. xii. 7.) that he was afraid. Note, The more we see of God, the more cause we see for holy trembling and blushing before him. Those whom God is pleased to manifest himself to, are thereby laid and kept very low in their own eyes, and see cause to fear, even *the Lord and his goodness*, Hos. iii. 5. He said, How dreadful is this place? *i. e.* The appearance of God in this place is never to be thought of, but with



with a holy awe and reverence. I shall have a respect for this place, and remember it by this token as long as I live: not that he thought the place itself any nearer the divine visions than other places; but what he saw there at this time, was, as it were, *the house of God*, the residence of the divine majesty, and *the gate of Heaven*, i. e. the general rendezvous of the inhabitants of the upper world; as the meetings of a city were in their gates; or, the angels ascending or descending were like travellers passing and repassing thro' the gates of a city. Note, (1.) God is in a special manner present, there where his grace is revealed, and his covenants published and sealed, as of old by the ministry of angels, so now by instituted ordinances, *Matth. xxviii. 20.*

(2.) There where God meets us with his special presence, we ought to meet him with the most humble reverence, remembering his justice and holiness, and our own meanness and vileness.

3. He took care to preserve the memorial of it two ways.

(1.) He set up the stone for a pillar, *ver. 18.* not as if he thought the visions of his head were any way owing to the stone on which it lay, but thus he would mark the place against he came back, and erect a lasting monument of God's favour to him: and because he had not time now to build an altar here, as Abraham did in the places where God appeared to him, *Gen. xii. 7.* he therefore poured oil on the top of this stone, which probably was the ceremony then used in dedicating their altars, as an earnest of his building an altar when he should have conveniences for it, as afterwards he did, in gratitude to God for this vision, *chap. xxxv. 7.* Note, Grants of mercy call for returns of duty; and the sweet communion we have with God, ought ever to be remembered.

(2.) He gave a new name to the place, *ver. 19.* It had been called Luz, an almond-tree, but he will have it henceforward called Beth-el, the house of God. This gracious appearance of God to him put a greater honour and lustre, and made it more remarkable than all the almond-trees that flourished there. This is that Beth-el where, long after it is said, *God found Jacob, and there*, in what he said to him, *he spake with us*, *Hos. xii. 4.* In process of time this Beth-el, the house of God, became Bethaven, a house of vanity and iniquity, when Jeroboam set up one of his calves there.

4. He made a solemn vow upon this occasion, *ver. 20, 21, 22.* By religious vows we give glory to God, and own our dependance upon him, and we lay a bond upon our own souls, to engage and quicken our obedience to him. Jacob was now in fear and distress, and in times of trouble it is seasonable to make vows, or when we are in pursuit of any special mercy, *John i. 16. Psal. lxvi. 13, 14. 1 Sam. i. 11. Numb. xxi. 1, 2, 3.* Jacob had now had a gracious visit from Heaven, God had renewed his covenant with him, and the covenant is mutual, when God ratifies his promises to us, it is proper for us to repeat our promises to him. Now in this vow observe,

1. Jacob's faith; God had said, *ver. 15, I am with thee and will keep thee*; Jacob takes hold of that, and infers, *seeing God will be with me, and will keep me*, as he hath said, and (which is implied in that promise) will provide comfortably for me; and seeing he hath promised to bring me again to this land, that is, to my father's house, whom I hope to find alive at my return (so unlike was he to Esau who longed for the days of mourning for his father) in peace, I depend upon it. Note, God's promises are to be the guide and measure of our desires and expectations.

2. Jacob's modesty and great moderation in his desires: He will cheerfully content himself with bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and though God's promise had now made him heir to a very great estate, yet he indents not for soft clothing and dainty meat, Agur's wish is his, *Feed me with food convenient for me*; and see *1 Tim. vi. 8.* Nature is content with a little, and grace with less. Those that have most in effect have no more for themselves but food and raiment, the overplus they have only either the keeping of, or, the giving of, not the enjoyment of: if God give us more we are bound to be thankful, and to use it for him, if he give us but this we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it.

3. Jacob's piety, and his regard to God, which appears here,

1. In what he desired; that God would be with him and keep him. Note, We need desire no more to make us easy and happy, wherever we are, but to have God's presence with us, and to be under his protection: it is comfortable in a journey to have a guide in an unknown way, a guard in a dangerous way, to be well carried, well provided for, and to have good company in any way, and they that have God with them have all this in the best manner.

2. In what he designed; his resolution is, (1.) In general. to cleave to the Lord, as his God in covenant, *Then shall the Lord be my God.* Not as if he would disown him and cast him off if he should want food and raiment, no, though he slay us we must stick to him, but then I will rejoice in him as my God; then I will be the more strongly engaged to abide with him. Note, Every mercy we receive from God should be improved as an additional obligation upon us to walk closely with him as our God. (2.) In particular, that he would perform some special acts of devotion in token of his gratitude. (1.) This pillar shall keep possession here till I come back in peace, and then it shall be God's

house, i. e. an altar shall be erected here to the honour of God. (2.) The house of God shall not be unfurnished, nor his altar without a sacrifice, *of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee*, to be spent either upon God's altars, or upon his poor, which are both his receivers in the world. Probably it was according to some general instructions received from Heaven that Abraham and Jacob offered the tenth (in proportion) of their achievements to God. Note, 1. God must be honoured with our estates, and must have his dues out of them: When we receive more than ordinary mercy from God, we should study to give some signal Instances of gratitude to him. 2. The tenth is a very fit proportion to be devoted to God, and employed for him; though as circumstances vary it may be more or less, as God prospers us, *2 Cor. ix. 7.*

## C H A P. XXIX.

This chapter gives us an account of God's providences concerning Jacob, pursuant to the promises made him in the foregoing chapter.

1. How he was brought in safety to his journey's end, and directed to his relations there, who bid him welcome, *ver. 1—14.*  
2. How he was comfortably disposed of in marriage, *ver. 15—30.*  
3. How his family was built up in the birth of four sons, *ver. 31, ad fin.* The affairs of princes and mighty nations that were then in being, are not recorded in the book of God, but are left to be buried in oblivion, while these small domestic concerns of holy Jacob are particularly recorded with their minute circumstances, that they may be in everlasting remembrance. For the memory of the just is blessed.

1. **T**HEN Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. 2. And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the wells mouth. 3. And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the sheep and put the stone again upon the wells mouth in his place. 4. And Jacob said unto them, my brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. 5. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. 6. And he said unto them, is he well? And they said, He is well: and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. 7. And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. 8. And they said we cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the wells mouth; then we water the sheep.

No particular journal is kept of Jacob's expedition further than Beth-el, as there is of all the stages of Israel's march to Canaan; no, he had no more such happy nights as he had at Beth-el, no, more such visions of the Almighty; that was intended for a feast, he must not expect it to be his daily bread.

But 1. We are here told how cheerfully he proceeded in his journey after that sweet communion he had with God at Beth-el: *Then Jacob lift up his feet*; so the margin reads it, *ver. 1.* Then he went on with cheerfulness and alacrity, not burthened with his cares, nor cramped with his fears, being assured of God's gracious presence with him. Note, After the visions we have had of God, and the vows we have made to him in solemn ordinances, we should run the way of his commandments with enlarged hearts, *Heb. xii. 1.*

2. How happily he arrived at his journey's end; providence brought him to the very field where his uncle's flocks were to be watered, and there he met with Rachel that was to be his wife. Observe, 1. the divine providence is to be acknowledged in all the little circumstances which concur to make a journey, or other undertaking, comfortable and successful. If, when we are at a loss, we meet with those seasonably that can direct us; if we meet with a disaster, and those are at hand that will help us, we must not say it was by chance, or, that fortune therein favoured us, but it was by providence, and God therein favoured us: our ways are ways of pleasantness, if we continually acknowledge God in them. 2. Those that have flocks must look well to them, and be diligent to know their state, *Prov. xxvii. 23.* What is here said of the constant care of the shepherds concerning their sheep, (*ver. 2, 3, 7, 8.*) may serve to illustrate the tender concern which our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, hath for his flock the church, for he is the good shepherd that knows his sheep, and is known of them, *John. x. 14.* The stone at the well's mouth, which is so often mentioned here, was either to secure their property in it, for water was scarce, it was not there *ut communis aquarum*, or, it was to save the well from receiving damage



mage from the heat of the sun, or from any spiteful hand, or to prevent the lambs of the flock from being drowned in it. 3. Separate interests should not take us off from joint and mutual help; when all the shepherds came together with their flocks, then like loving neighbours at watering-time, they watered their flocks together. 4. It becomes us to speak civilly and respectfully to strangers. Though Jacob was no courtier, but a plain man dwelling in tents, and a stranger to complement, yet he addresseth himself very obligingly to those people he met with, and calls them his brethren, *ver.* 4. The law of kindness in the tongue has a commanding power, *Prov.* xxxi. 26. Some think he calls them brethren because they were of the same trade, shepherds like him. Though he was now upon his preferment he was not ashamed of his occupation. 5. Those that shew respect ordinarily have respect shewed them. As Jacob was civil to these strangers, so he found them civil to him: when he undertook to teach them how to dispatch their business, *ver.* 7, they did not bid him meddle with his own concerns, and let them alone, but though he were a stranger gave him the reason of their delay, *ver.* 8. Those that are neighbourly and friendly shall have neighbourly and friendly usage.

9. And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her fathers sheep: for she kept them. 10. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mothers brother, and the sheep of Laban his mothers brother; that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mothers brother. 11. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. 12. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her fathers brother, and that he was Rebekahs son: and she ran and told her father. 13. And it came to pass when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sisters son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. 14. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh: and he abode with him the space of a month.

Here we see, 1. Rachel's humility and industry: *she kept her fathers sheep*, *ver.* 9. *i. e.* she took the care of them, having servants under her that were employed about them, Rachel's name signifies a Sheep. Note, Honest useful labour is that which no body needs to be ashamed of, nor ought it to be a balk to any one's preferment. 2. Jacob's tenderness and affection: when he understood that this was his kinswoman (probably he had heard of her name before) knowing what his errand was into that country, we may suppose it struck into his mind immediately, that this must be his wife, as one already smitten withan honest comely face (tho' it is likely, sun-burnt, and she in the homely drefs of a shepherdess) he is wonderful officious, and ready to serve her, *ver.* 10. addresseth himself to her with tears of joy, and kisses of love, *ver.* 11. she runs with all haste to tell her father, for she will by no means entertain her kinsman's address without her father's knowledge and approbation, *ver.* 12. These mutual respects at their first interview were good presages of their being a happy couple. 3. Providence made that which seemed contingent and fortuitous to give speedy satisfaction to Jacob's mind as soon as ever he came to the place he was bound for. Abraham's servant when he came upon a like errand met with the like encouragement. Thus God guides his people *with his eye*; *Psal.* xxxii. 8. It is a groundless conceit which some of the Jewish writers have, that Jacob when he kissed Rachel wept, because he had been set upon in his journey by Eliphaz the eldest son of Esau, at the command of his father, and robbed of all his money and jewels, which his mother had given him when she sent him away: it is plain it was his passion for Rachel, and the surprize of this happy meeting that drew these tears from his eyes. 4. Laban, though none of the best humoured men, bid him welcome; was satisfied in the account he gave of himself, and of the reason of his coming in such poor circumstances; while we avoid the extream on the one hand of being foolishly credulous, we must take heed of falling into the other extream of being uncharitably jealous and suspicious. Laban owned him for his kinsman; *ver.* 14, *Thou art my bone and my flesh*. Note, Those are hard-hearted indeed that are unkind to their relations, and that *hide themselves from their own flesh*, *Isaiah* lviii. 7.

15. And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? 16. And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17. Leah was tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured. 18. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. 19. And Laban said, It is better

that I give her to thee, then that I should give her to another man: abide with me. 20. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel: and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. 21. And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife (for my days are fulfilled) that I may go in unto her. 22. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. 23. And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him: and he went in unto her. 24. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid, for an handmaid. 25. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? 26. And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born. 27. Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. 28. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. 29. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid. 30. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

Here is, 1. The fair contract made between Laban and Jacob, during the month that Jacob spent there as a guest, *ver.* 14. it seems he was not idle, nor did he spend his time in sport and pastime, but, like a man of business, though he had no stock of his own, he applied himself to serve his uncle, as he had begun, *ver.* 10. when he *watered his flock*. Note, Wherever we are it is good to be employing ourselves in some useful business, which will turn to a good account to ourselves or others. Laban it seems was so taken with Jacob's ingenuity and industry about his flocks, that he was desirous he should continue with him, and very fairly reasons thus, *ver.* 15. *Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought?* No, what reason for that? If Jacob be so respectful to his uncle as to give him his service without demanding any consideration for it, yet Laban will not be so unjust to his nephew as to take advantage either of his necessity, or of his good nature. Note, Inferior relations must not be imposed upon; if it be their duty to serve us, it is our duty to reward them. Now had Jacob a fair opportunity to make known to Laban the affection he had for his daughter Rachel; and having no worldly goods in his hand wherewith to endow her, he promises him seven years service, upon condition that at the end of the seven years he would bestow her upon him for his wife. It appears by computation that Jacob was now seventy seven years old when he bound himself apprentice for a wife, and *for a wife he kept sheep*, *Hos.* xii. 12. His posterity are there minded of it long after, as an Instance of the meanness of their original; probably Rachel was young, and scarce marriageable when Jacob came first, which made him the more willing to stay for her till his seven years service were expired.

2. Jacob's honest performance of his part of the bargain, *ver.* 20. He served seven years for Rachel; and if Rachel still continued to keep her father's sheep as she did, *ver.* 9. his innocent and religious conversation with her, while they kept the flocks could not but increase their mutual acquaintance and affection. Solomon's song of love is a pastoral. If she now left it off, his easing her of that care was very obliging: Jacob honestly served out his seven years, though he was old, and did not forfeit his indentures, nay, he served them cheerfully, *they seemed to him but a few days for the love he had to her*: As if it was more his desire to earn her than to enjoy her. Note, Love makes long and hard services short and easy; hence we read of the labour of love, *Heb.* vi. 10. If we know how to value the happiness of Heaven, the sufferings of this present time will be as nothing to us, in comparison of it. An age of work will be but as a few days to those that love God, and long for Christ's appearing.

3. The base cheat which Laban put upon him when he was out of his time: he put Leah into his arms instead of Rachel, *ver.* 23. This was Laban's sin, he wronged both Jacob and Rachel, whose affections, doubtless, were engaged to each other, and if (as some say) Leah was herein no better than an adulteress, it was no small wrong to her too. But it was Jacob's affliction, a damp to the mirth of the marriage-feast, when in the morning behold it was Leah, *ver.* 25. It is easy to observe here how Jacob was paid in his own coin. He had cheated his own father when he pretended to be Esau, and now his father-in-law cheated him. Herein how unrighteous soever Laban was, the Lord was righteous, as *Judg.* i. 7. even the righteous if they take a false step are sometimes thus recompensed in the earth. Many that are not like Jacob disappointed in person, soon find themselves as much to their grief, disappointed in the character. The choice of that relation therefore on both sides ought to be made with good advice and consideration, that if there should be a disappointment



ment it may not be aggravated by a consciousness of mismanagement.

4. The excuse and attonement Laban made for the cheat, (1.) The excuse was frivolous, *ver. 26. It must not be so done in our country.* We have reason to think there was no such custom of his country, as he pretends, only he banters Jacob with it, and laughs at his mistake. Note, Those that can do an ill thing, and then think to turn it off with a jest, though they may deceive themselves and others, will find at last that God is not mocked. But if there were such a custom, and that he resolved to observe it, he should have told Jacob so, when he undertook to serve him for his younger daughter. Note, As saith the proverb of the ancients, *wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, 1 Sam. xxiv. 13.* Those that deal with treacherous men must expect to be dealt treacherously with. (2.) His compounding of the matter did but make ill worse, *we will give thee this also, ver. 27.* Hereby he drew Jacob into the sin and snare, and disquiet of multiplying wives, which remains a blot in his escutcheon, and will be so to the end of the world. Honest Jacob did not design it, but to have kept as true to Rachel as his father had done to Rebekah; he that had lived without a wife to the 84th year of his age could then have been very well content with one: but Laban, to dispose of his two daughters without portions, and to get seven years service more out of Jacob thus imposeth upon him, and draws him into such a strait by his fraud, that (the matter not being yet settled, as it was afterwards, by the divine law, *Lev. xviii. 18.* and more fully since by our Saviour, *Matth. xix. 5.*) he had some colourable reason for marrying them both. He could not refuse Rachel, for he had wedded her; he could not refuse Leah, for he had bedded her, and therefore Jacob must be content and take two talents, *2 Kings v. 23.* Note, one sin is commonly the inlet of another. They that go in by one door of wickedness commonly cannot find the way out but by another. The polygamy of the patriarchs was excusable in them, because though there was a reason against it as antient as Adam's marriage, *Mal. ii. 15.* yet there was no express command against it, it was in them a sin of ignorance, it was not the product of any sinful lust, but for the building up of the church, which was the good that providence brought out of it; but it will by no means justify the like practice now, when God's will is plainly made known, that one man and one woman only must be joined together, *1 Cor. vii. 2.* The having of many wives suits well enough with the carnal sensual spirit of the Mahometan imposture which allows it, but we have not so learned Christ. Dr Lightfoot makes Leah and Rachel to be figures of the two churches, the Jews under the law, and the Gentiles under the gospel: the younger the more beautiful, and more in the thoughts of Christ when he came in the form of a servant, but the other, like Leah, first embraced; yet in this the allegory doth not hold, that the Gentiles, the younger, were more fruitful, *Gal. iv. 27.*

31. And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. 32. And Leah conceived and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. 33. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon. 34. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. 35. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah, and left bearing.

We have here the birth of four of Jacob's sons, all by Leah. Observe, 1. That Leah, who was less beloved, was blessed with children, when Rachel was denied that blessing, *ver. 31.* See how providence, in dispensing its gifts, observes a proportion; to keep the balance even, setting crosses and comforts one over against another, that none may be either too much elevated, or too much depressed; Rachel wants children, but she is blessed with her husband's love; Leah wants that, but she is fruitful. Thus it was between Elkanah's two wives, *1 Sam. i. 5.* for the Lord is wife and righteous; *when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, i. e. loved less than Rachel, in which sense it is required that we hate the father and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luk. xiv. 26.* then the Lord granted her a child; which was a rebuke to Jacob for making so great a difference between those that he was equally related to; a check to Rachel, who, perhaps, insulted over her sister upon that account, and a comfort to Leah, that she might not be over-whelmed with the contempt put upon her: Thus *God giveth abundant honour to that which lacked, 1 Cor. xii. 24.*

2. That the names she gave her children were expressive of her respectful regards both to God and to her husband. (1.) She appears very ambitious of her husband's love; she reckoned the want of it her affliction, *ver. 32.* not upbraiding him with it as

his fault, nor reproaching him for it, and so making herself uneasy to him; but laying it to heart as her grief, which she had reason to bear with the more patience, because she herself was consenting to the fraud by which she became his wife: and we may well bear that trouble with patience, which we bring upon ourselves by our own sin and folly. She promised herself that the children she bore him would gain her the interest she desired in his affections: She called her first-born Reuben, see a son, with this pleasant thought, *Now will my husband love me:* and her third son Levi, joined, with this expectation, *Now will my husband be joined unto me, ver. 34.* Mutual affection is both the duty and comfort of that relation; and yoke-fellows should study to recommend themselves to each other, *1 Cor. vii. 33, 34.* (2.) She thankfully acknowledgeth the kind providence of God in it, *The Lord hath looked upon mine affliction, ver. 32. The Lord hath heard, i. e. taken notice of it, that I was hated, (for our afflictions, as they are before God's eyes, so they have a cry in his ears) He hath therefore given me this son.* Note, Whatever we have that contributes either to our support and comfort under our afflictions, or to our deliverance from them, God must be owned in it, especially his pity and tender mercy. Her fourth she called Judah, praise, saying, *Now will I praise the Lord, ver. 35.* And this was he, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Note, 1. Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing, ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving: fresh favours should quicken us to praise God for former favours; *Now will I praise the Lord* more and better than I have done. 2. All our praises must centre in Christ, both as the matter of them, and as the mediator of them. He descended from him whose name was Praise, for he is our praise: Is Christ formed in my heart? *Now will I praise the Lord.*

## C H A P. XXX.

In this Chapter we have an account of the increase, 1. of Jacob's family; eight children more we find registered in this chapter; Dan and Naphtali by Bilhah, Rachel's maid, *ver. 1—8.* Gad and Asher by Zilpah, Leah's maid, *ver. 9—13.* Issachar, Zebulon, and Dinah, by Leah, *ver. 14—21.* And last of all, Joseph by Rachel, *ver. 22—24.* 2. Of Jacob's estate. He comes upon a new bargain with Laban, *ver. 25—34.* And in the six years further service he did to Laban, God wonderfully blessed him, so that his stock of cattle became very considerable, *ver. 35—43.* And herein was fulfilled the blessing which Isaac dismissed him with, *chap. xxviii.* 3. God make thee fruitful and multiply thee. Even these small matters concerning Jacob's house and field, though they seem inconsiderable are improveable for our learning. For the scriptures were not written for princes and statesmen, to instruct them in politics, but for all people, even the meanest, to direct them in their families and callings: yet some things are here recorded concerning Jacob, not for imitation, but for admonition.

1. **A**ND when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. 2. And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? 3. And she said, Behold, my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. 4. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. 5. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. 6. And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. 7. And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. 8. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali. 9. When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. 10. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. 11. And Leah said, A troupe cometh: and she called his name Gad. 12. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son. 13. And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.

We have here the ill consequences of that odd marriage which Jacob made with the two sisters. Here is,

1. An unhappy disagreement between him and Rachel, *ver. 1, 2.* occasioned not so much by her own barrenness as by her sister's fruitfulness. Rebekah, the only wife of Isaac was long childless, and yet we find no uneasiness between her and Isaac; but here because Leah bears children, Rachel cannot live peaceably with Jacob. 1. Rachel frets, *ver. 1.* she envied her sister; envy is grieving at the good of another, than which no sin is more injurious both to God, our neighbour, and ourselves. She considered not



not that it was God that made the difference, and that though in this single instance her sister was preferred before her, yet in other things she had the advantage. Let us carefully watch against all the risings and workings of this passion in our minds. Let not our eye be evil towards any of our fellow-servants, because our master's is good. But this was not all, she said to Jacob, *Give me children or else I die*. Note, We are very apt to miss it in our desires of temporal mercies, as Rachel here; (1.) A child would not content her; but because Leah has more than one, she must have more too, *Give me children*. (2.) Her heart is inordinately set upon it, and if she have not what she would have she will throw away her life, and all the comforts of it. Give them me, or else I die, *i. e.* I shall fret myself to death. The want of this satisfaction will shorten my days: some think she threatens Jacob to lay violent hands upon herself if she could not obtain this mercy. (3.) She did not apply herself to God by prayer, but to Jacob only, forgetting that *children are a heritage of the Lord*, *Psal. cxxvii. 3.* we wrong both God and ourselves when our eye is more to men the instruments of our crosses and comforts than to God the author. Observe a difference between Rachel's asking for this mercy, and Hannah's *1 Sam. i. 10, &c.* Rachel envied, Hannah wept; Rachel must have children, and she died of the second, Hannah prayed for this child, and she had four more. Rachel is importunate and peremptory, Hannah is submissive and devout, if thou wilt give me a child, I will give him to the Lord. Let Hannah be imitated and not Rachel; and let our desires be always under the conduct and check of reason and religion. 2. Jacob chides, and most justly, *ver. 2.* he loved Rachel, and therefore reproved her for what she said amiss. Note, Faithful reproofs are products and instances of true affection, *Psal. cxli. 5. Prov. xxvii. 5, 6.* Job reproved his wife when she spake the language of the foolish woman, *Job xxi. 10.* See *1 Cor. vii. 16.* He was angry, not at the person, but at the sin; he expressed himself so as to shew his displeasure. Note, Sometimes it is requisite that a reproof should be given warm, like a physical potion, not too hot, lest it scald the patient, yet not cold, lest it do not work. It was a very grave and pious reply which Jacob gave to Rachel's peevish demand: *Am I in God's stead?* The Chaldee paraphraseth it well, *Dost thou ask sons of me, oughtest thou not to ask them from before the Lord?* The Arabic reads it, *Am I above God;* can I give thee that which God denies thee? This was said like a plain man. Observe,

(1.) He acknowledges the hand of God in the affliction, which he was a sharer with her in: *He hath withheld the fruit of the womb*. Note, Whatever we want it is God that withholds it, a sovereign Lord, most wise, holy, and just, that may do what he will with his own, and is debtor to no man; that never did, nor ever can do, any wrong to any of his creatures. The key of the clouds, of the heart, of the grave, and of the womb, are four keys which God has in his hand, and which (the Rabbins say) he intrusts neither with angel nor seraphim. See *Rev. iii. 7. Job xi. 10—xii. 14.*

(2.) He acknowledgeth his own inability to alter what God had appointed, *Am I in God's stead?* What, dost thou make a god of me? *Deos qui rogat ille facit.* Note, 1. There is no creature that is, or can be, to us in God's stead. God may be to us instead of any creature, as the sun, instead of the moon and stars, but the moon and all the stars will not be to us instead of the sun. No creature's wisdom, power, and love, will be to us instead of God's. 2. It is therefore our sin and folly to place any creature in God's stead, and to place that confidence in any creature, which is to be placed in God only.

2. An unhappy agreement between him and the two handmaids. 1. At the persuasion of Rachel he took Bilhah her handmaid to wife, that according to the usage of those times his children by her might be adopted and owned as her mistresses children, *ver. 3, &c.* She would rather have children by reputation than none at all; children that she might fancy to be her own, and call her own, though they were not so. One would think her own sisters children were nearer a-kin to her than her maid's, and she might with more satisfaction have made them her own, if she had so pleased; but (so natural is it to us all to be fond of power) children that she had a right to rule were more desirable to her than children that she had more reason to love: and, as an early instance of her dominion over the children born in her apartment, she takes a pleasure in giving them names, that carry in them nothing but marks of emulation with her sister. As if she had overcome her, (1.) At law, she calls the first son of her handmaid, Dan, judgment, saying, *God hath judged me, ver. 6, i. e.* given sentence in my favour. (2.) In battle; she calls the next Naphtali, wrestlings, saying, *I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed, ver. 8.* as if all Jacob's sons must be born men of contention: See what roots of bitterness envy and strife are, and what mischief they make among relations. 2. At the persuasion of Leah he took Zilpah her handmaid to wife also, *ver. 9.* Rachel had done that absurd and preposterous thing of putting her maid into her husband's bed, in emulation with Leah, and now Leah (because she missed one year in bearing children) doth the same, to be even with her, or rather to keep before her. See the power of jealousy and rivalry, and admire the wisdom of the divine appointment which joins together one man and one

woman only, for *God has called us to peace, and purity, 1 Cor. vii. 15.* Two sons Zilpah bare to Jacob, whom Leah looked upon herself as entitled to, in token of which she called one Gad, *ver. 11.* promising herself a little troop of children, and children are the militia of a family, they fill the quiver, *Psal. cxxvii. 4, 5.* The other she called Asher, happy, thinking herself happy in him, and promising herself that her neighbours would think so too, *ver. 13. The daughters will call me blessed.* Note, It is an instance of the vanity of the world, and the foolishness bound up in our hearts, that most people value themselves and govern themselves more by reputation than either by reason or religion; they think themselves blessed, if the daughters do but call them so. Much amiss there was in the contest and competition that was between these two sisters, yet God brought good out of this evil, for the time being now at hand when the seed of Abraham must begin to increase and multiply, thus Jacob's family was replenished with twelve sons, heads of the thousands of Israel, from whom the celebrated twelve tribes descended and were named.

14. And Reuben went in the days of wheat-harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy sons mandrakes. 15. And she said unto her, It is a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my sons mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy sons mandrakes. 16. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me, for surely I have hired thee with my sons mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. 17. And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob a fifth son. 18. And Leah said, God hath given me mine hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. 19. And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. 20. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. 21. And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah. 22. And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. 23. And she conceived and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach. 24. And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

Here is, 1. Leah fruitful again, after she had, for some time, left bearing: Jacob, it should seem, associated more with Rachel than with Leah. The law of Moses supposes it a common case, that if a man had two wives one would be beloved, and the other hated, *Deut. xxi. 15.* But at length Rachel's strong passions betrayed her into a bargain with Leah, that Jacob should return to her apartment. Reuben, a little lad of five or six years old, playing in the field, found mandrakes, *Dudaim*. It is uncertain what they were, the critics are not agreed about them; we are sure they were some rarities, either fruits or flowers that were very pleasant to the smell, *Cant. vii. 13.* Note, The God of nature has provided not only for our necessities, but for our delights: there are products of the earth in the exposed fields, as well as in the planted protected gardens that are very valuable and useful. How plentifully is nature's house furnished and her table spread? Her precious fruits offer themselves to be gathered by the hands of little children. It is a laudable custom of the devout Jews when they delighted themselves, suppose in eating of an apple, to lift up their hearts and say, blessed be he that made this fruit pleasant: Or, in smelling of a flower, blessed be he that made this flower sweet. Some think these mandrakes were jessamin flowers; whatever they were Rachel could not see them in Leah's hands, whither the child had brought them, but she must covet them: She cannot bear the want of these pretty flowers, but at any rate she will purchase them. Note, There may be great sin and folly in the inordinate desire of a small thing. Leah takes this advantage (as Jacob had of Esau's coveting his red pottage) to obtain that which was justly due to her, but which Rachel would not otherwise have consented to. Note, Strong passions often thwart one another, and those cannot but be continually uneasy that are hurried by them. Leah is overjoyed that she shall have her husband's company again, that her family might yet further be built up, which is the blessing she desires and devoutly prays for, as is intimated, *ver. 17.* where it is said, *God hearkened unto Leah.* The learned Bishop Patrick very well suggests here, that the true reason of this contest between Jacob's wives for his company, and their giving him their maids to be his wives, was the earnest desire they had to fulfil the promise made to Abraham (and now lately renewed to Jacob) that his seed should be as the stars of Heaven for multitude, and that in one



seed of his, the Messiah, all the nations of the earth should be blessed. And he thinks it had been below the dignity of this sacred history to take such particular notice of these things, if there had not been some such great consideration in them. Two sons Leah was now blessed with; the first she called Issachar, a Hire, *ver. 18*, reckoning herself well repaid for her mandrakes; nay, (which is a strange construction of the providence) rewarded for giving her maid to her husband. Note, We abuse God's mercy when we reckon that his favours countenance and patronize our follies. The other she called Zebulun, Dwelling, *ver. 20*, owning God's bounty to her, *God has endued me with a good dowry*: Jacob had not endowed her when he married her, nor had he wherewithal in possession, but she reckons a family of children, not a bill of charges, but a good dowry, *Psal. cxiii. 9*. She promises herself more of her husband's company now she had born him six sons, and that in love to his children at least he would often visit her lodgings. Mention is made, *ver. 21*, of the birth of a daughter Dinah, because of the following story concerning her, chap. xxxiv. Perhaps Jacob had other daughters, though not registered.

2. Rachel, fruitful at last, *ver. 22*. *God remembered Rachel*, whom he seemed to have forgotten, and *hearkened to her*, whose prayers had been long denied, and then she bare a son. Note, As God justly denies the mercy we have been inordinately desirous of, so sometimes he graciously grants at length that which we have long waited for. He corrects our folly, and yet considers our frame, and doth not contend for ever. Rachel called her son Joseph, which, in Hebrew, is a-kin to two words of a contrary signification, *Asaph, abstulit*, he has taken away my reproach, as if the greatest mercy she had in this son were, that she had saved her credit. And *Jasaph, addidit*, the Lord shall add to me another son; which may be looked upon either as the language of her inordinate desire, she scarce knows how to be thankful for one, unless she may be sure of another: Or, of her faith, she takes this mercy as an earnest of further mercy: Hath God given me his grace? I may call it Joseph, and say, he shall add more grace: hath he given me his joy? I may call it Joseph, and say, he will give more joy. Hath he begun, and shall he not make an end?

25. And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. 26. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee. 27. And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience, that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. 28. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. 29. And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattel was with me. 30. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? 31. And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock: 32. I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattel, and all the brown cattel among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. 33. So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted amongst the goats, and brown amongst the sheep, that shall be accounted stolen with me. 34. And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. 35. And he removed that day the he-goats, that were ring-straked, and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hands of his sons. 36. And he set three days journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Here is, 1. Jacob's thoughts of home. He faithfully served his time out with Laban, even his second apprenticeship, though he was an old man, had a growing family, to provide for, which it was high time for him to set up for himself, though Laban's service was hard, and he had cheated him in the first bargain he had made, yet Jacob honestly performs his engagements. Note, A good man though he swear to his own hurt will not change. And though others have deceived us that will not justify us in deceiving them. Our rule is to do as we would be done by, not as

we are done by. Jacob's term being expired he begs leave to be gone, *ver. 25*. Observe, 1. He retained his affection for the land of Canaan, not only because it was the land of his nativity, and his father and mother were there whom he longed to see. But because it was the land of promise, and in token of his dependence upon the promise of it though he sojourned in Haran, he can by no means think of settling there. Thus should we be affected towards our heavenly country, looking upon ourselves as strangers here, and that as our home, and longing to be there as soon as the days of our service upon earth are numbered and finished. We must not think of taking root here, for this is not our place and country, *Heb. xiii. 14*. 2. He was desirous to go to Canaan, though he had a great family to take with him, and no provision yet made for them. He had got wives and children with Laban, but nothing else, yet he doth not solicit Laban to give him either a portion with his wives, or the keeping of some of his children. No, all his request is, *Give me my wives and my children and send me away*, *ver. 25, 26*. Note, Those that trust in God, and in his providence and promise, though they have great families and small incomes, can cheerfully hope that he that feeds mouths will send meat. He that feeds the brood of the ravens will not starve the seed of the righteous.

2. Laban's desire of stay, *ver. 27*. In love to himself, not to Jacob, or to his wives or children, he speaks him very fair to continue his chief shepherd; praying him of all love not to leave him, *if I have found favour in thine eyes tarry*. Note, Churlish selfish men know how to give good words when it is to serve their own ends. Laban found that his stock had wonderfully increased with Jacob's good management, and he owns it with very good expressions of respect both to God and Jacob. *I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for thy sake*. Observe, 1. Laban's learning. *I have learned by experience*. Note, There is many a profitable good lesson to be learned by experience. We are very unapt scholars if we have not learned by experience the evil of sin, the treachery of our own hearts the vanity of the world, the goodness of God, the gains of godliness and the like. 2. Laban's lesson; he owns, 1. That his prosperity was owing to God's blessing; *The Lord has blessed me*. Note, Worldly men that chuse their portion in this life are often blessed with an abundance of this world's goods. Common blessings are given plentifully to many that have no title to covenant-blessings. 2. That Jacob's piety had brought that blessing upon him. *The Lord hath blessed me* (not for my own sake, let not such a man as Laban that lives without God in the world think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, *Jam. i. 7*.) but *for thy sake*. Note, 1. Good men are blessings to the places where they live, even there where they live meanly and obscurely, as Jacob in the field, and Joseph in the prison, *Gen. xxxix. 23*. 2. God often blesteth bad men with outward mercies for the sake of their godly relations, tho' it is seldom that they have either the wit to see it, or the grace to own it as Laban did here.

3. The new bargain they came upon. Laban's craft and covetousness took advantage of Jacob's plainness, honesty, and good-nature, and perceiving that Jacob began to be won upon by his fair speeches, instead of making him a generous offer, and bidding high as he ought to have done, all things considered, he puts it upon him to make his demands, *ver. 28*. *appoint me thy wages*, knowing he would be very modest in them, and would ask less than he could for shame offer. Jacob accordingly makes a proposal to him, in which, 1. He shews what reason he had to insist upon so much, considering, (1.) That Laban was bound in gratitude to do well for him, because he had not only served him faithfully, but very successfully, *ver. 30*. Yet here observe; how he speaks like himself very modestly: Laban had said, *The Lord hath blessed me for thy sake*; Jacob will not say so, but *The Lord hath blessed thee since my coming*. Note, Humble saints take more pleasure in doing good than in hearing of it again. (2.) That he himself was bound in duty to take care of his own family. *Now, when shall I provide for my own house also?* Note, Faith and charity, tho' they are excellent things, must not take us off from making necessary provisions for our own support, and the support of our families. We must, like Jacob, *trust in the Lord, and do good*, and yet we must, like him, *provide for our own houses* also, he that doth not *is worse than an infidel*, *1 Tim. v. 8*.

2. He is willing to refer himself to the providence of God, which he knew extends itself to the smallest things, even the colour of the cattle, and he will be content to have for his wages the sheep and goats of such and such a colour, speckled, spotted, and brown, which should hereafter be brought forth, *ver. 32, 33*. This he thinks will be a most effectual way both to prevent Laban's cheating him, and to secure himself from being suspected of cheating Laban. Some think he chose this colour, because in Canaan it was generally most affected and delighted in; their shepherds in Canaan are called Nekodim, *Amos i. 1*. the same word here used for speckled: and Laban was willing to consent to this bargain, because he thought if those few he had that were now speckled and spotted were separated from the rest, which by agreement was to be done immediately, the body of the flock which Jacob was to tend, being of one colour, either all black, or all white, would produce few or none of mixt colours, and so he should have Jacob's service for nothing, or next nothing. According to this bargain,



bargain, those few that were party-coloured were separated, and put into the hands of Laban's sons, and sent three days journey off; so great was Laban's jealousy, lest any of those should mix with the rest of the flock to the advantage of Jacob. And now a fine bargain Jacob has made for himself! Is this his providing for his own house, to put it upon such an uncertainty? If these cattle bring forth, as usually cattle do, young ones of the same colour with themselves, he must still serve for nothing, and be a drudge and a beggar all the days of his life; but he knows whom he has trusted, and the event shewed, 1. That he took the best way that could be with Laban, who otherwise would certainly have been too hard for him. And, 2. That it was not in vain to rely upon the divine providence, which owns and blesses honest humble diligence. Those that find men whom they deal with unjust and unkind, shall not find God so, but that some way or other he will right the injured, and be a good pay-master to those that commit their cause to him.

37. And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hasef, and chesnut-tree; and piled the white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. 38. And he set the rods which he had piled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs, when the flocks came to drink; that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattel ring-straked, speckled, and spotted. 40. And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ring-straked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban: and he put his own flocks by themselves; and put them not unto Laban's cattel. 41. And it came to pass whensoever the stronger cattel did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattel in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42. But when the cattel were feeble, he put them not in: so the feeble were Laban's, and the stronger Jacobs. 43. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattel, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.

Here is Jacob's honest policy to make his bargain more advantageous to himself than it was likely to be: and if he had not taken some course to help himself it would have been an ill bargain indeed, which he knew Laban would never have considered, but would have been well pleased to see him a loser, so little did he consult any ones interest but his own. Now Jacob's contrivances were,

1. To set piled sticks before the cattle where they were watered, that looking much at those unusual party-coloured sticks, by the power of imagination they might bring forth young ones in like manner party-coloured, *ver.* 37, 38, 39. Probably this custom was commonly used by the shepherds of Canaan who coveted to have their cattle of this motly colour. Note, It becomes a man to be master of his trade, whatever it is, and to be not only industrious but ingenious in it, and to be versed in all its lawful arts and mysteries: for what is a man but his trade. There is a discretion which God teaches the husbandman (as plain a trade as that is) and which he ought to learn, *Isa.* xxviii. 26.

2. When he began to have a stock of ring-straked and brown, he contrived to set them first, and to put the faces of the rest towards them, with the same design as he did the former; but would not let his own that were motly-coloured look at Laban's that were self-coloured, *ver.* 40. strong impressions it seems are made by the eye, with which therefore we have need to make a covenant.

3. When he found his project succeeded, through the special blessing of God upon it, he contrived by using it only with the stronger cattle to secure to himself those that were most valuable, leaving the feeble to Laban, *ver.* 41, 42. Thus Jacob increased exceedingly (*ver.* 43.) and grew very rich in a little time. This success of his policy; it is true was not sufficient to justify it, if there had been any thing fraudulent or unjust in it, which we are sure there was not, for he did it by divine direction, *chap.* xxxi. 12. nor was there any thing in the thing itself; but the honest improvement of a fair bargain, which the divine providence wonderfully prospered both in justice to Jacob whom Laban had wronged, and dealt hardly with, and in pursuance of the particular promises made to him of the tokens of the divine favour. Note, Those who while their beginning is small are humble and honest, contented and industrious, are in a likely way to see their latter end greatly encreasing; he that is faithful in a little shall be intrusted with more; that is faithful in that which is another man's, shall be intrusted with something of his own. Jacob that had been a just servant, became a rich master.

C H A P. XXXI.

*Jacob was a very honest good man, a man of great devotion, and integrity, and yet he had more trouble and vexation than any of the patriarchs. He had left his father's house in a fright, came to his uncle in distress, very hard usage he had met with there, and now is going back surrounded with fears. Here is, 1. His resolution to return, *ver.* 1—16. 2. His clandestine departure, *ver.* 17—21. 3. Laban's pursuit of him in displeasure, *ver.* 22—25. 4. The hot words that passed between them, *ver.* 26—42. 5. Their amicable agreement at last, *ver.* 43, ad fin.*

1. **A**ND he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our fathers; and of that which was our fathers hath he gotten all this glory. 2. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it was not toward him as before. 3. And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee. 4. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, 5. And said unto them, I see your fathers countenance, that it is not toward me as before: but the God of my father hath been with me. 6. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. 7. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times: but God suffered him not to hurt me. 8. If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattel bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ring-straked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattel ring-straked. 9. Thus God hath taken away the cattel of your father, and given them to me. 10. And it came to pass at the time that the cattel conceived; that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattel were ring-straked, speckled, and grissled. 11. And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. 12. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattel are ring-straked, speckled, and grissled: for I have seen all that Laban doth unto thee. 13. I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred. 14. And Rachel and Leah answered, and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our fathers house? 15. Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. 16. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our childrens: now then whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

Jacob is here taking up a resolution presently to quit his uncle's service, to take what he had and go back to Canaan. And his resolution he took up upon a just provocation, by divine direction, and with the advice and content of his wives.

1. Upon a just provocation, for Laban and his sons were become very cross and ill-natured towards him, so that he could not stay among them with safety and satisfaction.

(1.) Laban's sons shewed it in what they said, *ver.* 1. it should seem they said it in Jacob's hearing with a design to vex him. The last chapter began with Rachel's envying Leah, this begins with Laban's sons envying Jacob. Observe, (1.) How greatly they magnify Jacob's prosperity. He has gotten all this glory. And what was this glory that they make so much ado about? It was a parcel of brown sheep, and speckled goats, (and perhaps the fine colours made them seem more glorious) and some camels and asses, and such like trading, and that was all *this glory*. Note, Riches are glorious things in the eyes of carnal people, while to all those that are conversant with heavenly things, they have no glory in comparison with the glory which excelleth. Men's over-valuing worldly wealth is that fundamental error which is the root of covetousness, envy, and all evil. (2.) How basely they reflect upon Jacob's fidelity, as if what he had, he had not gotten honestly. *Jacob has taken away all that was our fathers*. Not all, sure: What was become of those cattle which were committed to the custody of Laban's sons, and sent *three days journey off*, *chap.* xxx. 35, 36. they mean all that was committed to him, but speaking invidiously they express themselves thus generally. Note, 1. Those that are never so careful to keep a good conscience, yet cannot always be sure of a good name. 2. This is one of the vanities



vanities and vexation which attend outward prosperity, that it makes a man to be envied of his neighbours, *Eccl. iv. 4.* And, *Who can stand before envy?* Prov. xxvii. 4. Whom Heaven blesses, hell curses, and all its children on earth.

(2.) Laban himself said little, but his countenance was not towards Jacob, as it used to be, and Jacob could not but take notice of it, *ver. 2, 5.* He was but a churl at the best, but now he was more churlish than formerly. Note, Envy is a sin, that often appears in the countenance, hence we read of an *evil eye*, Prov. xxiii. 6. Sowre looks may do a great deal towards the ruin of peace and love in a family, and the making those uneasy, whose comfort we ought to be tender of. Laban's angry countenance, lost him the greatest blessing his family ever had, and justly.

2. He resolved it by divine direction, and under the convoy of a promise, *ver. 3.* *The Lord said unto Jacob, return, and I will be with thee.* Tho' Jacob had met with very hard usage here, yet he would not quit his place till God bid him. He came thither by orders from heaven, and there he would stay till he was ordered back. Note, It is our duty to set ourselves, and it will be our comfort to see ourselves under God's guidance, both in our going out, and in our coming in. The direction he had from Heaven is more fully related in the account he gives of it to his wives, *ver. 10, 11, 12, 13.* where he tells them of a dream he had about the cattle, and the wonderful increase of those of his colour: and how the angel of God in that dream, (for I suppose the dream spoken of, *ver. 10*, and that, *ver. 11.* to be the same) took notice of his workings of his fancy in his sleep, and instructed him, that it was not by chance, nor by his own policy, that he obtained that great advantage; but (1.) By the providence of God, who had taken notice of the hardships Laban had put upon him, and took this way to right him. *For I have seen all that Laban doth unto thee*, and herein I have an eye to that. Note, There is more of equity in the distributions of the divine providence, than we are aware of, and by them the wronged are righted really, tho' perhaps insensibly. Nor was it only by the justice of providence, that Jacob was thus enriched, but, (2.) In performance of the promise, intimated in that, *ver. 13.* *I am the God of Beth-el.* That was the place where the covenant was renewed with him. Note, Worldly prosperity and success is then doubly sweet and comfortable, when we see it flowing not from common providence, but from covenant-love: *to perform the mercy promised*; when we have it from God, as *the God of Beth-el*, from those promises of the life which now is, that belongs to godliness, even when he had this hopeful prospect of growing rich with Laban, he must think of returning. When the world begins to smile upon us, we must remember it is not our home. *Now arise*, (*ver. 13.*) *and return* (1.) to thy devotions in Canaan, the solemnities of which had perhaps been much intermitted while he was with Laban. The times of this servitude God had winked at, but now *return to the place where thou anointedst the pillar, and vowedst the vow.* Now thou beginnest to grow rich, it is time to think of an altar and sacrifices again. (2.) To thy comforts in Canaan, *return to the land of thy kindred.* He was here among his near kindred, but those only he must look upon as his kindred, the kindred he must live and die with, to whom pertained the covenant. Note. The heirs of Canaan must never reckon themselves at home till they come thither, however they may seem to take root here.

3. He resolved it with the knowledge and consent of his wives. He sent for Rachel and Leah to him *to the field*, *ver. 4*, either that he might discourse them more privately; or, because one would not come to the other's apartment, and he would willingly talk with them together, or because he had work to do in the field which he would not leave. Note, Husbands that love their wives, will communicate their purposes and intentions to them. Where there is a mutual affection, there will be a mutual confidence. And the prudence of the wife should engage the heart of her husband safely to *trust in her*, Prov. xxxi. 11. He told his wives, 1. How faithfully he had served their father, *ver. 6.* Note, If others do not do their duty to us, yet we shall have the comfort of having done ours to them. 2. How unfaithfully their father had dealt with him, *ver. 7.* He would never stick to any bargain that he made with him, but after the first year still as he saw providence favour Jacob with the colour agreed on, every half year of the remaining five he changed it for some other colour, which made it ten times, as if he thought not only to deceive Jacob, but to deceive the divine providence which manifestly smiled upon him. Note, Those that deal honestly are not always honestly dealt with. 3. How God had owned him notwithstanding; not only protecting him from Laban's ill will, (*God suffered him not to hurt me.* Note, Those that keep close to God shall be kept safe by him) but providing plentifully for him, notwithstanding Laban's design to ruin him, *ver. 9.* *God has taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me.* Thus the righteous God paid Jacob for his hard service out of Laban's estate; as afterwards he paid the seed of Jacob for their service of the Egyptians, with their spoils. Note, 1. God is not unrighteous to forget his people's work and labour of love, tho' men be so, *Heb. vi. 10.* Providence has ways of making those honest in the event, that are not so in their design. 2. *The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just*, Prov. xiii. 22. 4. He told them of the command

God had given him in a dream to return to his own country, (*ver. 13.*) that they might not suspect his resolution to arise from inconstancy, or any disaffection to their country or family, but might see it to proceed from a principle of obedience to his God, and dependance on him. Lastly, His wives cheerfully consented to his resolution. They also remonstrate their grievances, complaining that their father had been not only unkind but unjust to them, *ver. 14, 15, 16.* That he looked upon them as strangers, and was without natural affection towards them; and whereas Jacob had looked upon the wealth, which God had passed over from Laban to him as his wages, they look upon it as their portions; so that both ways God forced Laban to pay his debts, both to his servant, and to his daughters. So then it seemed, (1.) They were weary of their own people, and their fathers house, and could easily forget them. Note, This good use we should make of the unkind usage we meet with from the world, we should fit the more loose to it, and be willing to leave it, and desirous to be at home. (2.) They were willing to go along with their husband, and to put themselves with him under the divine conduct: *Whatsoever God hath said unto thee do.* Note, Those wives that are their husbands meet helps, will never be their hindrances in doing that which God calls them to.

17. Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels. 18. And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram; for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. 19. And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her fathers. 20. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. 21. So he fled with all that he had, and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead. 22. And it was told Laban on the third day, that Jacob was fled. 23. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. 24. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

Here is, 1. Jacob's flight from Laban. We may suppose he had been long considering of it, and casting for it, but when now at last God had given him positive orders to go, he made no delay, nor was he *disobedient to the heavenly vision*. The first opportunity that offered itself, he laid hold on, when Laban was shearing his sheep, *ver. 19*, that part of his flock which was in the hands of his sons three days journey off. Now, 1. It is certain it was lawful for Jacob to leave his service suddenly, without giving a quarter's warning. It was not only justified by the particular instructions God gave him, but warranted by the fundamental law of self-preservation, which directs us when we are in danger to shift for our own safety, as far as we can do it without wronging our consciences. 2. It was his prudence to *steal away unawares to Laban*, lest, if Laban had known, he should have hindered him, or plundered him. 3. It was honestly done to take no more than his own with him, the *cattle of his getting*, *ver. 18.* He took what providence gave him, and was content with that, and would not take the repair of his damages into his own hands. Yet Rachel was not so honest as her husband, she *stole her fathers images* (*ver. 19.*) and carried them away with her. The Hebrew calls them Teraphim. Some think they were only little representations of the ancestors of the family in statue or picture, which Rachel had a particular fondness for, and was desirous to have with her now she was going into another country. It should rather seem they were images for a religious use, Penates, household gods, either worshipped or consulted as oracles, and we are willing to hope (with Bishop Patrick) that she took them away (not out of covetousness of the rich metal they were made of, much less for her own use, or out of any superstitious fear lest Laban, by consulting his Teraphim, might know which way they were gone, Jacob no doubt dwelt with his wives as a man of knowledge, and they were better taught than so) but with a design to convince her father of the folly of his regard to those as gods which could not secure themselves, *Isa. xli. 1, 2.*

2. Laban's pursuit of Jacob. Tidings were brought him on the third day that Jacob was fled, he immediately raises the whole clan, takes his brethren, *i. e.* the relations of his family that were all in his interests, and he pursues Jacob, as Pharaoh and his Egyptians afterwards pursued the seed of Jacob, to bring him back into bondage again, or with design to strip him of what he had. Seven days journey he marched in pursuit of him, *ver. 23.* He would not have taken half that pains to have visited his best friends. But the truth is, bad men will do more to serve their sinful passions, than good men will to serve their just affections, and are more vehement in their anger than in their love.

Well,



Well, at length Laban overtook him, and the very night before he came up with him, God interposed in the quarrel, rebuked Laban, and sheltered Jacob, charging Laban not to *speake unto him either bad or good*, ver. 24. i. e. say nothing against his going on with his journey, for the thing proceedeth from the Lord. The same Hebraism we have, *Gen. xxiv. 50.* Laban during his seven days march had been full of rage against Jacob, and was now full of hopes that his *lust should be satisfied upon him*; (*Exod. xv. 9.*) But God comes to him and with one word ties his hands, though he do not turn his heart. Note, 1. In a dream, and in *slumberings upon the bed*, God has ways of opening the ears of men, and sealing their instruction, *Job. xxxii. 15, 16.* Thus he admonisheth men by their consciences, in secret whispers, which the man of wisdom will hear and heed. 2. The safety of good men is very much, owing to the hold God has of the consciences of bad men, and the access he has to them. 3. God sometimes appears wonderfully for the deliverance of his people, then when they are upon the very brink of ruin. The Jews were saved from Haman's plot, when the king's decree drew near to be put in execution, *Esth. ix. 1.*

25. Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. 26. And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword? 27. Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me? and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harp? 28. And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. 29. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt, but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed, that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. 30. And now thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longest after thy father's house: yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? 31. And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure, thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me. 32. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee: for Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. 33. And Laban went into Jacobs tent, and into Leahs tent, and into the two maid-servants tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leahs tent, and entered into Rachels tent. 34. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camels furniture, and sat upon them: and Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. 35. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord, that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me: and he searched, but found not the images.

We have here the reasoning, not to say the rallying, that was between Laban and Jacob at their meeting, in that mountain which was afterward called Gilead, ver. 25. Here is,

1. The high charge which Laban exhibited against him. He accuses him. 1. As a runagate, that had unjustly deserted his service: To represent him as a criminal, he will have it thought, that he intended kindness to his daughters, ver. 27, 28, that he would have dismissed them with all the marks of love and honour that could be, that he would have made a solemn business of it, would have kissed his little grand-children, (and that was all he would have given them) and according to the foolish custom of the country would have sent them away *with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harp.* Not as Rebekah was sent away out of the same family above one hundred and twenty years before with prayers and blessings, chap. xxiv. 60. But with sport and merriment; which was a sign that religion was very much decayed in the family, and they had lost their seriousness. However he pretends they should have been treated with respect at parting. Note, It is common for ill men when they are disappointed in their malicious projects, to pretend that they designed nothing but what was kind and fair. When they cannot do the mischief they intended, they are loth it should be thought that ever they intended it. When they have not done what they should have done, they come off with this excuse, that they would have done it. Men may thus be deceived, but God cannot. He likewise suggests that Jacob had some ill design in stealing away thus, (ver. 26.) that he took his wives away as captives. Note, Those that mean ill themselves, are most apt to put the worst construction upon what others do innocently. The insinuating and aggravating of faults, are the artifices of a designing malice, and

those must be represented, (though never so unjustly) as intending ill against whom ill is intended. Upon the whole matter, 1. He boasts of his own power, ver. 29. *It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt*: he supposeth, that he had both right on his side, a good action, (as we say) against Jacob, and strength on his side, either to revenge the wrong, or recover the right. Note, Ill people commonly value themselves much upon their *power to do hurt*, whereas a *power to do good* is much more valuable. And those that will do nothing to make themselves amiable, love to be thought formidable. And yet, 2. he owns himself under the check and restraint of God's power, and though it redounded much to the credit and comfort of Jacob, he cannot avoid telling him the caution God had given him the night before in a dream, *speake not to Jacob good or bad.* Note, As God has all wicked instruments in a chain, so when he pleases he can make them sensible of it, and force them to own it to his praise, as protector of the good, as Balaam did. Or we may look upon this as an instance of some conscience Laban made of God's express prohibitions. As bad as he was, he durst not injure one whom he saw to be the particular care of Heaven. Note, A great deal of mischief would be prevented, if men would but attend to the caveats which their own consciences give them in slumberings upon the bed, and regard the voice of God in them.

2. He accuses him as a thief, ver. 30. Rather than own that he had given him any colour of provocation to depart, he is willing to impute it to a foolish fondness he had for *his father's house*, which made him that he would *needs be gone*, but then (saith he) *wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?* Foolish man! to call those his gods that could be stolen! Could he expect protection from them that could neither resist nor discover their invaders? Happy are they who have the Lord for their God, for they have a God that they cannot be robbed of. Enemies may steal our goods, but not our God. Here Laban lays to Jacob's charge *things that he knew not*, the common distress of oppressed innocency.

2. Jacob's Apology for himself. Those that commit their cause to God, yet are not forbidden to plead it themselves with *meekness and fear.* 1. As to the charge of stealing away his own wives, he clears himself by giving the true reason why he went away unknown to Laban, ver. 31. he feared lest Laban would by force take away his daughters, and so oblige him by the bond of his affection to his wives to continue in his service. Note, Those that are unjust in the least, it may be suspected will be unjust also in much, *Luke xvi. 10.* If Laban deceive Jacob in his wages, it is likely he will make no conscience of robbing him of his wives, and putting those assunder whom God had joined together. What may not be feared from men that have no principle of honesty? 2. As to the charge of stealing Laban's gods, he pleads not guilty, ver. 32. He not only did not take them himself, (he was not so fond of them) but he did not know that they were taken. Yet perhaps he spoke too hastily and inconsiderately when he said, *Whoever has taken them, let him not live*; and might reflect upon it with some bitterness, when not long after Rachel who had taken them, died suddenly in travail. How just soever we think ourselves to be, it is best to forbear imprecations lest they fall heavier than we imagine.

3. The diligent search Laban made for his gods, ver. 33, 34, 35. partly out of hatred to Jacob, whom he would gladly have an occasion to quarrel with, partly out of love to his idols, which he was loth to part with. We do not find that he searched Jacob's flocks for stolen cattle; but he searched his furniture for stolen gods. He was of Micah's mind, *Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* Judg. xviii. 24. Were the worshippers of false gods so set upon their idols, did they thus walk in the name of their Gods? and shall not we be as solicitous in our enquiries after the true God? when he is justly departed from us how carefully should we ask, *Where is God my maker? O that I knew where I might find him?* Job xxiii. 3. Laban after all his searches missed of finding his gods, and was baffled in his enquiry with a sham, but our god will not only be found of those that seek him, but they shall find him their bountiful rewarder.

36. And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: And Jacob answered, and said to Laban, What is my trespass? What is my sin that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? 37. Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household-stuff? set it here before my brethren, and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. 38. This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. 39. That which was torn of beasts, I brought not unto thee, I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. 40. Thus I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. 41. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle; and thou



hast changed my wages ten times. 42. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty : God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

See in these verses, (1.) The power of provocation. Jacob's natural temper was mild and calm, and grace had improved it, he was a smooth man, and a plain man, and yet Laban's unreasonable carriage towards him put him into a heat that transported him into some indecency, *ver.* xxxvi. 37. His chiding with Laban was excusable, but not justifiable, nor is it written for our imitation. Grievous words stir up anger, and commonly do but make ill worse. It is a very great affront to one that bears an honest mind, to be charged with dishonesty, and yet even that we must learn to bear with patience, committing our cause to God. (2.) The comfort of a good conscience. This was Jacob's rejoicing, that when Laban accused him, his own conscience acquitted him, and witnessed for him that he had been *in all thing willing*, and careful *to live honestly*, Heb. xiii. 18. Note, Those that in any employment have dealt faithfully, if they cannot obtain the credit of it with men, yet shall have the comfort of it in their own bosoms. (3.) The character of a good servant, and particularly of a faithful shepherd : Jacob had approved himself such a one, *ver.* 38. 40. (1.) He was very careful, so that through his oversight or neglect the ewes did not cast their young. His piety also procured a blessing upon his master's effects that were under his hands. Note, Servants should take no less care of what they are intrusted with for their masters, than if they were entitled to it as their own. (2.) He was very honest, and took none of that for his own eating, which was not allowed him. He contented himself with mean fare, and coveted not to feast upon the rams of the flock. Note, Servants must not be dainty in their food, nor covet what is forbidden them, but in that, and other instances, shew all good fidelity. (3.) He was very laborious, *ver.* 40. He stuck to his business all weathers : And bore both heat and cold with invincible patience. Note, Men of business that intend to make something of it, must resolve to endure hardness. Jacob is here an example to ministers ; they also are shepherds, of whom it is required that they be true to their trust, and willing to take pains. (4.) The character of a hard master : Laban had been such a one to Jacob. Those are ill masters, (1.) Who exact from their servants that which is unjust, by obliging them to make good that which is not damaged by any default of theirs. This Laban did, *ver.* 39. Nay, if there have been a neglect, yet it is unjust to punish above the proportion of the fault. That may be an inconsiderable damage to the master, which would go near to ruin a poor servant. (2.) Those also are ill masters, who deny to their servants that which is just and equal. This Laban did, *ver.* 41. It was unreasonable for him to make Jacob serve for his daughters when he had in reversion so great an estate secured to him by the promise of God himself : as it was also to give him his daughters without portions, when it was in the power of his hands to do well for them. Thus he *robbed the poor, because he was poor*, as he did also by *changing his wages*. (5.) The care of providence for the protection of injured innocence, *ver.* 42. God took cognizance of the wrong done to Jacob, and repaid him whom Laban would otherwise have sent empty away, and rebuked Laban who otherwise would have swallowed him up. Note, God is the patron of the oppressed : and those who are wronged and yet not ruined, cast down, and yet not destroyed, must acknowledge him in their preservation, and give him the glory of it. Observe, 1. Jacob speaks of God as the *God of his father*, intimating, that he thought himself unworthy to be thus regarded, but *was beloved for the father's sake*. 2. He calls him the *God of Abraham*, and *the fear of Isaac* : for Abraham was dead, and gone to that world where perfect love casts out fear, but Isaac was yet alive, sanctifying the Lord in his heart, as his fear and his dread.

43. And Laban answered, and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine : and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born ? 44. Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee, 45. And Jacob took a stone and set it up for a pillar. 46. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones ; and they took stones, and made an heap ; and they did eat there upon the heap. 47. And Laban called it Jeger-sahadutha : but Jacob called it Galeed. 48. And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed : 49. And Mizpah ; for he said, the LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. 50. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives besides

my daughters, no man is with us ; see God is witness betwixt me and thee. 51. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee ; 52. This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm. 53. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac. 54. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread, and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. 55. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them : and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

We have here the compromising of the matter between Laban and Jacob. Laban had nothing to say in reply to Jacob's remonstrance, he could neither justify himself nor condemn Jacob, but was convicted by his own conscience of the wrong he had done him. And therefore desires to hear no more of that matter. He is not willing to own himself in a fault, nor to ask Jacob forgiveness, and make him satisfaction, as he ought to have done. But, 1. He turns it off with a profession of kindness for Jacob's wives and children, *ver.* 43. *These daughters are my daughters*. When he cannot excuse what he has done, he doth in effect own what he should have done : he should have treated them as his own, but he had counted them strangers, *ver.* 15. Note, It is common for those who are without natural affection to pretend much to it when it will serve a turn. Or perhaps Laban said this in a vain glorious way, as one that loved to talk big, great swelling words of vanity ; all that thou seest is mine : It was not so, it was all Jacob's, and he had paid dear for it, yet Jacob let him have his saying, perceiving him coming into a better humour. Note, Property lies near the hearts of worldly people. They love to brag of it, this is mine, and the other is mine, as Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. *my bread and my water*.

2. He proposeth a covenant of friendship between them, which Jacob readily agrees to, without insisting upon Laban's submission, much less his restitution. Note, When quarrels happen, we should be willing to be friends again upon any terms : peace and love are such valuable jewels that we can scarce buy them too dear. Better sit down losers than go on in strife. Now observe here,

1. The substance of this covenant. Jacob left it wholly to Laban to settle it. The tenor of it was, (1.) That Jacob should be a good husband to his wives, that he should not afflict them, nor marry other wives besides them, *ver.* 50. Jacob had never given him any cause to suspect that he would be any other than a kind husband, yet as if he had, he was willing to come under this engagement. Though Laban had afflicted them himself, yet he will bind Jacob that he shall not afflict them. Note, Those that are injurious themselves are commonly most jealous of others. And those that do not do their own duty are most peremptory in demanding duty from others. (2.) That he should never be an ill neighbour to Laban, *ver.* 52. It was agreed that no act of hostility should ever pass between them, that Jacob should forgive and forget all the wrongs he had received, and not remember them against Laban or his family in after-times. Note, We may resent an injury which yet we may not revenge.

2. The ceremony of this covenant, it was made and ratified with great solemnity, according to the usages of those times. 1. A pillar was erected, *ver.* 45, and a heap of stones raised, *ver.* 46, to perpetuate the memory of the thing, the way of recording agreements by writing being then either not known or not used. 2. A sacrifice was offered, *ver.* 54, a sacrifice of peace-offerings. Note, Our peace with God is that which puts true comfort into our peace with our friends. If parties contend, the reconciliation of both to him will facilitate their reconciliations one with another. 3. They did eat bread together, *ver.* 46, jointly partaking of the feast upon the sacrifice, *ver.* 54. This was in token of a hearty reconciliation. Covenants of friendship were antiently ratified by the parties eating and drinking together. It was in the nature of a love-feast. 4. They solemnly appealed to God concerning their sincerity herein. (1.) As a witness, *ver.* 49. *The Lord watch between me and thee, i. e.* The Lord take cognizance of every thing that shall be done on either side in violation of this league. When we are out of one another's sight, let this be a restraint upon us that wherever we are, we are under God's eye. This appeal is convertible into a prayer. Friends at a distance from each other may take the comfort of this, that when they cannot know nor succour one another, God watcheth between them, and hath his eye on them both. (2.) As a judge, *ver.* 53. The God of Abraham, from whom Jacob was descended, and the God of Nahor, from whom Laban was descended, the God of their father, the common ancestor, from whom they were both descended, judge betwixt us. God's relation to them is thus expressed to intimate that they worshipped one and the same God, upon which consideration there ought to be no enmity betwixt them. Note, Those that have one God should



should have one heart: they that agree in religion should strive to agree in every thing else. God is judge between contending parties, and he will judge righteously, whoever doth wrong it is at their peril. 5. They gave a new name to the place, *ver.* 47, 48. Laban called it in Syriac, and Jacob in Hebrew, the heap of witnesses. And, *ver.* 49, it was called Mizpah, a watch-tower. Posterity being included in the league, care was taken that thus the memory of it should be preserved. These names are applicable to the seals of the gospel-covenant which are witnesses to us if we be faithful, but witnesses against us, if we be false. The name Jacob gave this heap stuck by it, Galeed not the name Laban gave it: in all this encounter Laban was noisy, and full of words, affecting to say much, Jacob was silent and said little; when Laban appealed to God under many titles, Jacob only *swore by the fear of his father Isaac, i. e.* the God whom his father Isaac feared, who had never served other gods, as Abraham and Nahor had done. Two words of Jacob's were more memorable than all Laban's speeches and vain repetitions. For *the words of wisdom are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools*, Eccl. ix. 17. Lastly, After all this angry parley they part friends, *ver.* 55. Laban very lovingly *kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them*; and then went back in peace. Note, God is often times better to us than our fears, and strangely overrules the spirits of men in our favours, beyond what we could have expected, for it is not in vain to trust in him.

## C H A P. XXXII.

*We have here Jacob still upon his journey towards Canaan. Never did so many memorable things occur in any march, as in this of Jacob's little family. By the way he meets, 1. With good tidings from his God, ver. 1, 2. 2. With bad tidings from his brother, to whom he sent a message to notify his return, ver. 2—7. In his distress, 1. He divides his company, ver. 7, 8. 2. He makes his prayer to God, ver. 9—12. 3. He sends a present to his brother, ver. 13—23. 4. He wrestles with the angel, ver. 24—32.*

1. **A**ND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. 2. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is Gods host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

Jacob is here got clear of Laban, and pursuing his journey homewards, towards Canaan; when God has helped us through difficulties we should go on our way heavenward with so much the more cheerfulness and resolution.

Now, 1. Here is Jacob's convoy in this journey, *ver.* 1. *the angels of God met him*, in a visible appearance, whether in a vision by day, or in a dream by night, as when he saw them upon the ladder, chap. xxviii. 12, is uncertain. Note, Those that keep in a good way have always a good guard: angels themselves are ministering spirits, for their safety, *Heb.* i. 14. Where Jacob pitched his tents they pitched theirs about him, *Psal.* xxxiv. 7. They met him to bid him welcome to Canaan again; a more honourable reception this was, than ever any prince had that was met by the magistrates of a city in their formalities. They met him to congratulate his arrival, and his escape from Laban, for they have pleasure in the prosperity of God's servants. They had invisibly attended him all along, but now they appeared to him, because he had greater dangers before him than those he had hitherto encountered. Note, When God designs his people for extraordinary trials, he prepares them by extraordinary comforts. We would think it had been more seasonable for these angels to have appeared to him just in the heat of his engagement, either with Laban before or Esau after, than in this calm and quiet interval when he saw not himself in any imminent peril; but God will have us when we are in peace to provide for trouble, and when trouble comes to live upon former observations and experiences, for we *walk by faith, not by sight*. God's people at death are returning to Canaan, to their fathers house, and then the angels of God will meet them, to congratulate the happy finishing of their servitude, and to carry them to their rest.

2. The comfortable notice he took of this convoy, *ver.* 2. *This is God's host*, and therefore, 1. It is a powerful host: very great is he that is thus attended, and very safe that is thus guarded. 2. God must have the praise of this protection; this I may thank God for, for it is his host. A good man may with an eye of faith see the same that Jacob saw with his bodily eyes, by believing that promise, *Psal.* xci. 11. *He shall give his angels charge over thee*. What need we dispute whether every particular saint has a guardian angel, when we are sure he has a guard of angels about him. To preserve the remembrance of this favour Jacob gave a name to the place from it, Mahanaim, two hosts, or two camps. That is, say some of the Rabbins, one host of the guardian angels of Mesopotamia, who conducted Jacob thence, and delivered him safe to the other host of the angels of Canaan, who met him upon the borders where he now was. Rather, they appeared to him in two hosts, one on either side, or one in the front, and the other rear, to protect him from Laban behind, and Esau before, that

they might be a compleat guard. Thus with God's favour he is compassed. Perhaps in allusion to this the church is called Mahanaim, two armies, *Cant.* vi. 13. Here was Jacob's family that made one army representing the church militant and itinerant on earth; and the angels another army representing the church triumphant, and at rest in Heaven.

3. And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. 4. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau: thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now. 5. And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men servants, and women servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. 6. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. 7. Then Jacob was greatly afraid, and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels into two bands: 8. And said, if Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

Now Jacob was re-entering Canaan; God, by the vision of angels, minded him of the friends he had when he left it, and thence he takes occasion to mind himself of the enemies he had, particularly Esau. It is likely Rebekah had sent him word of Esau's settlement in Seir, and of the continuance of his enmity to him, What shall poor Jacob do? He longs to see his father, and yet he dreads to see his brother: He rejoices to see Canaan again, and yet cannot but rejoice with trembling, because of Esau. 1. He sends a very kind and humble message to Esau. It doth not appear that his way lay through Esau's country, or that he needed to ask his leave for a passage, but his way lay near it, and he would not go by him without paying him the respects due to a brother, a twin-brother, an only brother, an elder brother, a brother offended. Note, (1.) Though our relations fail in their duty to us, yet we must make conscience of doing our duty to them. (2.) It is a piece of friendship and brotherly love to acquaint our friends of our state, and enquire into theirs. Acts of civilities may help to slay enmities. Jacob's message to him is very obliging, *ver.* 4, 6. (3.) He calls Esau his lord, himself his servant, to intimate, that he did not insist upon the prerogatives of the birth-right and blessing he had obtained for himself, but left it to God to fulfil his own purpose in his seed, Note, *Yielding pacifies great offences*, Eccl. x. 4. we must not grudge to speak in the most respectful submissive manner to those that are never so unjustly exasperated against us. 2. He gives him a short account of himself. That he was not a fugitive and a vagabond, but though long absent, had had a certain dwelling-place, with his own relations, *I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there till now*. And that he was not a beggar, nor did he come home as the prodigal son, destitute of necessities, and likely to be a charge to his relations; no, *I have oxen and asses*. This he knew would (if any thing) recommend him to Esau's good Affection. And, (3.) He courts his favour; *I have sent that I may find grace in thy sight*. Note, It is no disparagement to those that have the better cause to become petitioners for reconciliation, and to sue for peace as well as right.

2. He receives a very formidable account of Esau's warlike preparations against him, *ver.* 6. not a word but a blow; a very coarse return to his kind message, and a sorry welcome home to a poor brother. *He comes to meet thee, and four hundred men with him*. He is now weary of waiting for the days of mourning for his good father, and even before those come he resolves to slay his brother. 1. He remembers the old quarrel, and will now be revenged on him for the birthright and blessing, and if possible defeat Jacob's expectations from both. Note, Malice harboured will last long, and find an occasion to break out with violence a great while after the provocations given. Angry men have good memories. 2. He envies Jacob what little estate he had, and though he himself was now possessed of a much better, yet nothing will serve him but to feed his eyes upon Jacob's ruins and fill his fields with Jacob's spoils. Perhaps the account Jacob sent him of his wealth did but provoke him the more. 3. He concludes it easy to destroy him now he was upon the road, a poor weary traveller, unfixed, and (as he thinks) unguarded. They that have the serpent's poison have commonly the serpent's policy to take the first and fairest opportunity that offers itself for revenge. 4. He resolves to do it suddenly, and before Jacob was come to his father, lest he should interpose, and mediate between them. Esau was one of those that hated peace, when Jacob speaks, speaks peaceably, he is for war, *Psal.* cxx. 6, 7. Out he marches, spurred on with rage, and big with blood and murders, four hundred men he had with him, probably such as used to hunt with him, armed no doubt, rough and cruel like their leader, ready to execute the word of command, though never so barbarous, and now breathing nothing but threatenings and slaughter. The tenth part of these were



were enough to cut off poor Jacob and his guiltless, helpless, family, root and branch. No marvel therefore that it follows, *ver. vii.* *Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed*, perhaps the more so, having scarce recovered the fright Laban had put him in. Note, Many are the troubles of the righteous in this world, and sometimes the end of one is but the beginning of another. The clouds return after the rain. Jacob, though a man of great faith, yet was now greatly afraid. Note, A lively apprehension of danger, and a quickening fear arising from it, may very well consist with a humble confidence in God's power and promise. Christ himself in his agony was sore amazed.

3. He puts himself into the best posture of defence that his present circumstances will admit of. It was nonsense to think of making resistance, all his contrivance is to make an escape, *ver. 7, 8.* He thinks it prudence not to venture all in one bottom, and therefore divides what he had into two companies, that if one were smitten, the other might escape. Like a tender careful master of a family, he is more solicitous for their safety than for his own. He divided his company not as Abraham, chap. xiv. 15. for fight but for flight.

9. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: 10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. 11. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. 12. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

Our rule is to call upon God in the time of trouble, and we have here an example to that rule, and the success encourageth us to follow that example; *It was now even a time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it*, and here we have him praying for that salvation (*Jer. xxx. 7.*) In his distress he sought the Lord and he heard him. Note, Times of fear should be times of prayer; whatever frightens us should drive us to our knees to our God. Jacob had newly seen his guard of angels, but in this distress he applied himself to God, not to them, he knew they were his fellow-servants, *Rev. xxii. 9*, nor did he consult Laban's Teraphim, it was enough to him that he had a God to go to. And to him he addresseth himself with all possible solemnity, so running for safety into the name of the Lord, *as a strong tower*, *Prov. xviii. 10.* This prayer is the more remarkable because it won him the honour of being an *Israel, a prince with God*, and the father of the praying remnant, who, from hence are called the *seed of Jacob*, to whom he never said, *Seek ye me in vain*. Now it is worth while to enquire what there was extraordinary in this prayer, that it should gain the petitioner all this honour.

1. The request itself is one, and very express, *ver. 11.* *Deliver me from the hand of my brother*: Though there was no human probability on his side, yet he believed the power of God could rescue him, as a lamb out of the bloody jaws of the lion. Note, (1.) We have leave to be particular in our addresses to God, to mention the particular straits and difficulties we are in, for the God with whom we have to do is one we may be free with, *we have liberty of speech* (*παρρησία*) at the throne of grace. (2.) When our brethren aim to be our destroyers, it is our comfort that we have a father to whom we may apply ourselves as our deliverer.

2. The pleas are many, and very powerful; never was cause better ordered, *Job xxiii. 4.* He offers up his request with great faith, fervency, and humility. How earnestly doth he beg, *ver. 11.* *Deliver me, I pray thee*. His fear made him importunate; with what holy logic doth he argue, with what divine eloquence doth he plead? Here is a noble copy to write after.

1. He addresseth himself to God as the God of his fathers, *ver. 9.* such was the humble self-denying sense he had of his own unworthiness that he did not call God his own God, but a God in covenant with his ancestors, *O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac*; and this he could the better plead because the covenant by divine designation was entailed upon him. Note, God's covenant with our fathers may be a comfort to us when we are in distress. It has often been so to the Lord's people, *Psal. xxii. 4, 5.* Being born in God's house we are taken under his special protection.

2. He produceth his warrant, *Thou saidst unto me, return unto thy country*. He did not rashly leave his place with Laban, nor undertake this journey out of a fickle humour, or a foolish fondness for his native country, but in obedience to God's command. Note, 1. We may be in the way of our duty, and yet may meet with trouble and distress in that way. As prosperity will not prove us in the right, so cross events will not prove us in the wrong, we may be going whither God calls us, and yet may think our way hedged up with thorns. 2. We may comfortably trust God

with our safety while we carefully keep to our duty: if God be our guide he will be our guard.

3. He humbly acknowledgeth his own unworthiness to receive any favour from God, *ver. 10.* *I am not worthy*: it is a surprizing plea. One would think he should have pleaded that what was now in danger was his own against all the world, and that he had earned it dear enough, no, he pleads, *Lord, I am not worthy of it*. Note, Self-denial and self-abasement will become us in all our addresses to the throne of grace. Christ never commended any of his petitioners so much as him who said, *Lord, I am not worthy*, *Matth. viii. 8.* and her who said, *Truth, Lord*, *Matth. xv. 26.* Now observe here, 1. How magnificently and honourably he speaks of the mercies of God to him: Here is mercies, in the plural number, an inexhaustible spring, and innumerable streams; mercies and truth, *i. e.* past mercies given according to the promise, and further mercies secured by the promise. Note, What is laid up in God's truth, as well as what is laid out in God's mercies is the matter both of the comforts and the praises of active, believers. Nay, observe, it is all the mercies, and all the truth; the manner of expression is copious, and speaks his heart full of God's goodness. 2. How meanly and humbly he speaks of himself, disclaiming all thought of his own merit, *I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies*, much less am I worthy of so great a favour as this I am now suing for. Jacob was a considerable man, and upon many accounts very deserving, and, in treating with Laban, had justly insisted on his merits, but not before God. *I am less than all thy mercies*: so the word is. Note, The best and greatest of men are utterly unworthy of the least favour from God, and must be ready to own it upon all occasions. It was the excellent Mr. Herbert's motto, *Less than the least of all God's mercies*. Those are best prepared for the greatest mercies that see themselves unworthy of the least.

4. He thankfully owns God's goodness to him in his banishment, and how much it had out-done his expectations, *with my staff I passed over this Jordan*, poor and desolate like a forlorn and despised pilgrim; he had no guides, no companions, no attendants, no conveniences for travel, but his staff only, nothing else to stay himself upon; *and now I am become two bands*, now I am surrounded with a numerous and comfortable retinue of children and servants: though it was his distress that had now obliged him to divide his family into two bands, yet he makes use of that for the magnifying of the mercy of his increase. Note, 1. The increase of our families is then comfortable indeed to us when we see God's mercies, and his truth in it. 2. Those whose latter end doth greatly increase, ought, with humility and thankfulness, to remember how small their beginning was. Jacob pleads, *Lord, thou kept'st me when I went out only with my staff*, and had but one life to lose, wilt not thou keep me now so many are embarked with me?

5. He urges the extremity of the peril he was in, *Lord, deliver me from Esau, for I fear him*, *ver. 11.* The people of God have not been shy of telling God their fears; for they know he takes cognizance of them, and considers them. The fear that quickens prayer is itself pleasurable. It was not a robber but a murderer that he was afraid of: nor was it his own life only that lay at stake, but the mothers, and the childrens, that had left their native soil to go along with him. Note, Natural affection may furnish us with allowable acceptable pleas in prayer.

6. He insists especially upon the promise God had made him, *ver. 9.* *thou saidst, I will deal well with thee*, and again, in the close, *ver. 12.* *thou saidst I will surely do thee good*. Note, 1. The best we can say to God in prayer is, what he hath said to us. God's promises as they are the surest guide of our desires in prayer, and furnish us with the best petitions, so they are the firmest ground of our hopes, and furnish us with the best pleas. *Lord, thou saidst so and so, and wilt thou not be as good as thy word, the word upon which thou hast caused me to hope*, *Psal. cxix. 49.* 2. The most general promises are applicable to particular cases. *Thou saidst, I will do thee good*, *Lord, do me good in this matter*. He pleads also a particular promise, that of *multiplying of his seed*. *Lord, what will become of that promise if they be all cut off?* Note, (1.) There are promises to the families of good people which are improveable in prayer for family mercies ordinary and extraordinary, *Gen. xvii. 7.* *Psal. cxii. 2.—cii. 28.* (2.) The world's threatenings should drive us to God's promises.

13. And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand, a present for Esau his brother: 14. Two hundred she-goats, and twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15. Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals. 16. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and he said unto his servants. Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. 17. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou, and whither goest thou? and whose



whose are these before thee? 18. Then thou shalt say, They be servant Jacobs; it is a present unto my lord Esau: and behold also he is behind us. 19. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall you speak unto Esau, when you find him. 20. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us: for he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. 21. So went the present over before him, and himself lodged that night in the company. 22. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-servants, and his eleven sons and passed over the ford Jabbok. 23. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had.

Jacob having piously made God his friend by a prayer, is here prudently endeavouring to make Esau his friend by a present. He had prayed to God to deliver him from the hand of Esau, for he feared him, but neither did his fear sink into such a despair as dispirits for the use of means, nor did his prayer make him presume upon God's mercy, without the use of means. Note, When we have prayed to God for any mercy we must second our prayers with our endeavours, else instead of trusting God we tempt him; we must so depend upon God's providence as to make use of our own prudence. Help thyself, and God will help thee; God answers our prayers by teaching us to order our affairs with discretion. To pacify Esau,

1. Jacob sent him a very noble present, not of jewels or fine garments, he had them not, but of cattle, to the number five hundred and eighty in all, *ver. 13, 14, 15*. Now, 1. It was an evidence of the great increase with which God had blessed Jacob, that he could spare such a number of cattle out of his stock. 2. It was an evidence of his wisdom that he would willingly part with some to secure the rest; some mens covetousness loses them more than ever it got them, and by grudging them a little expence, they expose themselves to great damage, *skin for skin, and all that a man has, if he be a wise man, he will give for his life*. 3. It was a present that he thought would be acceptable to Esau, who had traded so much in hunting wild beasts, that perhaps he was but ill-furnished with tame cattle wherewith to stock his new conquests. And we may suppose that the mixt colours of Jacob's cattle, ring-straked, speckled, and spotted, would please Esau's fancy. 4. He promised himself that by this present he should gain Esau's favour, for a gift commonly *prospereth which way soever it turns*, Prov. xvii. 8, and *makes room for a man*, Prov. xviii. 16. nay, *it pacifies anger, and strong wrath*, Prov. xxi. 14. Note, (1.) We must not despair of reconciling ourselves, no not to those that have been most exasperated against us; we ought not to judge men unappeaseable till we have tried to appease them. (2.) Peace and love, though purchased dear, will prove a good bargain to the purchaser. Many a morose ill-natured man would have said in Jacob's case, Esau has vowed my death without cause, and he shall never be a farthing the better for me, I will see him far enough before I will send him a present, but Jacob forgives and forgets.

2. He sent him a very humble message, which he ordered his servants to deliver in the best manner, *ver. 17, 18*. They must call Esau their lord, and Jacob his servant: they must tell him the cattle they had was a small present which Jacob had sent him, as a taste of his improvements while he was abroad. The cattle he sent were to be disposed of in several droves, and the servants that attended each drove, were to deliver the same message, that the present might appear the more valuable, and his submission so often repeated might be the more likely to influence Esau. They must especially take care to tell him that Jacob was coming after, *ver. 18, 20*, that he might not suspect him fled for the same. Note, A friendly confidence in mens goodness may help to prevent the mischief designed us by their badness: if Jacob will seem not to be afraid of Esau, Esau, it may be hoped, will not be a terror to Jacob.

24. And Jacob was left alone: and there wrestled a man with him, until the breaking of the day. 25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacobs thigh was out of joynt, as he wrestled with him. 26. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: and he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name: And he said, Wherefore is it, that thou dost ask after my name?

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and he blessed him there. 30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 31. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 32. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacobs thigh, in the sinew that shrank.

We have here that famous story of Jacob's wrestling with the angel, and prevailing, which is referred to *Hof. xii. 4*, very early in the morning, a great while before day, Jacob had helped his wives and his children over the river, and he desired to be private, and was left alone, that he might again more fully spread his cares and fears before God in prayer. Note, We ought to continue instant in prayer, always to pray and not to faint: frequency and importunity in prayer prepare us for mercy. While Jacob was earnest in prayer, *stirring up himself to take hold on God*, an angel takes hold on him! Some think this was a created angel, the *angel of his presence*, (*Isa. lxiii. 9*.) one of those that *always behold the face of our Father*, and attend on the Shechinah, or Divine Majesty, which probably Jacob had also in view. Others think it was Michael our prince, the Eternal Word, the Angel of the Covenant, who is indeed the lord of the angels, who often appeared, occasionally, in a human shape, before he assumed the human nature for good and all; which soever it was we are sure *God's name was in him*, *Exod. xxiii. 21*.

Observe, 1. How Jacob and this angel engaged, *ver. 24*. It was a single combat, hand to hand, they had neither of them any seconds. Full of care and fear Jacob now was about the interview he expected next day with his brother, and to aggravate the trial, God himself seemed to come forth against him as an enemy, to oppose his entrance into the land of promise, and to dispute the pass with him, not suffering him to follow his wives and children whom he had sent before. Note, strong believers must expect divers temptations, and strong ones. We are told by the prophet, *Hof. xii. 4*, how *Jacob wrestled, he wept, and made supplication*, prayers and tears were his weapons. It was not only a corporal but a spiritual wrestling, by the vigorous actings of faith and holy desire, and thus all the spiritual seed of Jacob, that pray in praying still wrestle with God.

2. What was the success of the engagement.

1. Jacob kept his ground; though the struggle continued long the angel *prevailed not against him*, *ver. 25. i. e.* This discouragement did not shake his faith, nor silence his prayer. It was not in his own strength that he wrestled, nor by his own strength that he prevails, but in and by strength derived from Heaven. That of Job illustrates this, *Job xxiii. 6. will he plead against me with his great power?* No, had the angel done so, Jacob had been crushed, *but he would put strength in me*: and by that *strength Jacob had power over the angel*, *Hof. xii. 3*. Note, We cannot prevail with God, but in his own strength. It is his spirit that intercedes in us, and *helps our infirmities*, *Rom. viii. 26*.

2. The angel put out Jacob's thigh, to shew him what he could do, and that it was God he was wrestling with, for no man could disjoint his thigh with a touch: some think that Jacob felt little or no pain from this hurt; it is probable he did not, for he did not so much as halt till the struggle was over, *ver. 31*. and if so, that was an evidence of a divine touch indeed; which wounded and healed at the same time. Jacob prevailed, and yet had his thigh put out. Note, Wrestling believers may obtain glorious victories, and yet come off with broken bones, for *when they are weak then are they strong*, weak in themselves but strong in Christ, *2 Cor. xii. 10*. Our honours and comforts in this world have their allays.

3. The angel, by an admirable condescension, speaks Jacob fair to let him go, *ver. 26*. as God said to Moses, *Exod. xxxii. 10. Let me alone*; could not a mighty angel get clear of Jacob's grapples? He could; but thus he would put an honour upon Jacob's faith and prayer, and further try his constancy, *The king is held in the galleries*, *Cant. vii. 5. I held him* (saith the spouse) *and will not let him go*, *Cant. iii. 4*. The reason the angel gives why he would be gone, is, *because the day breaks*, and therefore he would not any longer detain Jacob, who had business to do, a journey to go, a family to look after, which especially in this critical juncture called for his attendance. Note, every thing is beautiful in it's season; even the business of religion and the comforts of communion with God, must sometimes give way to the necessary affairs of this life; God will have *mercy and not sacrifice*.

4. Jacob persists in his holy importunity: *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*; whatever becomes of his family and journey, he resolves to make the best hand he can of this opportunity, and not to lose the advantage of his victory: he doth not mean to wrestle all night for nothing, but humbly resolves he will have a blessing, and rather *shall all his bones be put out of joint*, than he will go away without one. The credit of a conquest will do him no good without the comfort of a blessing. In begging this blessing he owns his inferiority, though he seemed to have the upper hand in the struggle, for *the less is blessed of the better*. Note, Those that would have the blessing of Christ, must be in good earnest



earnest, and be importunate for it as those that resolve to have no nay. It is the fervent prayer that is the effectual prayer.

5. The angel puts a perpetual mark of honour upon him by changing his name, *ver. 27, 28.* Thou art a brave fellow (saith the angel) commend me to thee for a man of resolution; What is thy name? Jacob, saith he, a supplanter, so Jacob signifies: Well, saith the angel, be thou never so called any more; from henceforth thou shalt be celebrated, not for craft and artful management, but true valour; thou shalt be called Israel, a prince with God, a name greater than those of the great men of the earth. He is a prince indeed that is a prince with God, and those are truly honourable that are mighty in prayer, Israels, Israelites indeed. Jacob is here knighted in the field, as it were, and has a title of honour given him, by him that is the fountain of honour, which will remain to his praise to the end of time. Yet this was not all, having power with God he shall have power with men too. Having prevailed for a blessing from Heaven, he shall, no doubt, prevail for Esau's favour. Note, Whatever enemies we have, if we can but make God our friend, we are well enough; they that by faith have power in Heaven have thereby as much power on earth as they have occasion for.

6. He dismisseth him with a blessing, *ver. 29.* Jacob desired to know the angel's name, that he might, according to his capacity, do him honour too, *Judg. xiii. 18.* But that request was denied that he might not be too proud of his conquest, nor think he had the angel at such an advantage as to oblige him to what he pleased; no, *Wherefore dost thou ask after my name?* What good will it do thee to know that? The discovery of that was reserved for his death-bed, upon which he was taught to call him Shiloh. But instead of telling him his name he gave him his blessing, which was the thing he wrestled for; he blessed him there, repeated and ratified the blessing formerly given him. Note, Spiritual blessings which secure our felicity, are better and much more desirable than fine notions that satisfy our curiosity. An interest in the angel's blessing is better than acquaintance with his name. The tree of life is better than the tree of knowledge. Thus Jacob carried his point; a blessing he wrestled for, and a blessing he had, nor did ever any of his praying seed seek in vain: see how wonderfully God condescends to countenance and crown importunate prayer: those that resolve though God slay them, yet to trust in him, will at length be more than conquerors.

7. Jacob gives a new name to the place: he calls it Peniel, the *face of God*, *ver. 30.* because there he had seen the appearance of God, and obtained the favour of God. Observe, The name he gives to the place preserves and perpetuates not the honour of his valour or victory, but only the honour of God's free grace. He doth not say, in this place I wrestled with God, and prevailed, but in this place I saw God face to face, and my life was preserved: not, it was my praise that I came off a conqueror, but it was God's mercy that I escaped with my life. Note, It becomes those whom God honours to take shame to themselves, and to admire the condescensions of his grace to them. Thus David did after God had sent him a gracious message, *2 Sam. vii. 18. Who am I, O Lord God?*

Lastly, The memorandum Jacob carried of this in his bones, *he baled on his thigh*, *ver. 31.* and some think he continued to do so to his dying day, and if he did, he had not reason to complain, for the honour and comfort he obtained by this struggle was abundantly sufficient to countervail the damage, tho' he went limping to his grave. He had no reason to look upon it as his reproach, thus *to bear in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus*, *Gal. vi. 17.* yet it might serve like St Paul's thorn in the flesh, to keep him from being lifted up with the abundance of the revelations. Notice is taken of the sun's rising upon him when he passed over Peniel; for it is sun-rise with that soul that has communion with God. And the inspired penman mentions a traditional custom which the seed of Jacob had, in remembrance of this, never to eat of that finew, or muscle, in any beast by which the hip-bone is fixed in it's cup: by this observance they preserved the memorial of this story, and gave occasion to their children to enquire concerning it; they also did honour to the memory of Jacob. And this use we may still make of it, to acknowledge the mercy of God, and our obligations to Jesus Christ, that we may now keep up our communion with God in faith, hope, and love, without peril, either of life or limb.

## C H A P. XXXIII.

*We read in the former chapter how Jacob had power with God and prevailed, here we find what power he had with men too, and how his brother Esau was mollified, and, on a sudden, reconciled to him; for so it is written, Prov. xvi. 7. When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Here is, 1. A very friendly meeting between Jacob and Esau, ver. 1—4. 2. Their conference at their meeting, in which they use civilities. Their discourse is, (1.) About Jacob's family, ver. 5—7. (2.) About the present he had sent, ver. 8—11. (3.) About the progress of their journey, ver. 12—15. 3. Jacob's settlement in Canaan, his house ground, and altar, ver. 16—20.*

1. **A**ND Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. 2. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. 3. And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. 4. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.

Here, 1. Jacob discovers Esau's approach, *ver. 1.* Some think his lifting up his eyes notes his cheerfulness and confidence in opposition to a dejected countenance: having by prayer committed his case to God, he went on his way, and his *countenance was no more sad*, *1 Sam. i. 18.* Note, Those that have cast their care upon God, may look before them with satisfaction and composure of mind, cheerfully expecting the issue whatever it may be; come what will, nothing can come amiss to him whose heart is fixed trusting in God. Jacob sets himself upon his watch-tower to see what answer God will give to his prayers, *Hab. ii. 1.*

2. He puts his family into the best order he could to receive him, whether he should come as a friend, or, as an enemy; consulting their decency, if he come as a friend, and their safety if he come as an enemy, *ver. 1; 2.* Observe what a different figure these two brothers made. Esau is attended with a guard of 400 men; and looks big; Jacob is followed by a cumbersome train of women and children that are his care, and he looks tender and solicitous for their safety; and yet Jacob had the birthright, and was to have the dominion, and was every way the better man. Note, It is no disparagement to very great and good men to give a personal attendance to their families, and to their family affairs. Jacob, at the head of his household, set a better example than Esau at the head of his regiment.

3. At their meeting the expressions of kindness were interchanged in the best manner that could be between them.

1. Jacob bowed to Esau, *ver. 3.* Tho' he feared Esau as an enemy, yet he did obeysance to him as an elder brother, knowing and remembering perhaps that when Abel was preferred in God's acceptance before his elder brother Cain, yet God undertook for him to Cain that he should not be wanting in the duty and respect owing by a younger brother, *unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him*, *Gen. iv. 7.* Note, 1. The way to recover peace where it has been broken, is, to do our duty, and pay our respects upon all occasions as if it had never been broken. It is the remembering and repeating of matters that separates friends, and perpetuates the separation. 2. A humble submissive carriage goes a great way towards the turning away of wrath. Many preserve themselves by humbling themselves: the bullet flies over him that stoops.

2. Esau embraced Jacob, *ver. 4.* *He ran to meet him*, not in passion but in love, and as one heartily reconciled to him, he received him with all the endearments imaginable, *embraced him, fell on his neck, and kissed him.* Some think, that when Esau came out to meet Jacob it was with no ill design, but that he brought his 400 men only for state, that he might pay so much the greater respect to his returning brother. It is certain Jacob understood the report of his messengers otherwise, *chap. xxxii. 5, 6.* Jacob was a man of prudence and constancy, and we cannot suppose him to admit of a groundless fear, to such a degree as he did this, nor that the spirit of God would stir him up to pray such a prayer as he did for deliverance from a meer imaginary danger: and if there were not some wonderful change wrought upon the spirit of Esau at this time, I see not how wrestling Jacob could be said to obtain such power with men as to denominate him a prince. Note, 1. God hath the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them when and how he pleases by a secret, silent, but resistless, power. He can of a sudden convert enemies into friends, as he did two Sauls, one by restraining grace, *1 Sam. xxvi. 21, 25.* the other by renewing grace, *Acts ix. 21, 22.* 2. It is not in vain to trust in God, and to call upon him in the day of trouble, they that do so often find the issue much better than they expected.



3. They both wept. Jacob wept for joy to be thus kindly received by his brother, whom he had feared; and Esau perhaps wept for grief and shame to think of the ill design he had conceived against his brother, which he found himself strangely and unaccountably prevented from the execution of.

5. And he lift up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. 6. Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. 7. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. 8. And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. 9. And Esau said, I have enough; my brother, keep that thou hast unto thyself. 10. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I have seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. 11. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough: and he urged him, and he took it. 12. And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. 13. And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me; and if men should over-drive them one day, all the flock will die. 14. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure; until I come unto my lord unto Seir. 15. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me: And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

We have here the discourse between the two brothers at their meeting, which is very free and friendly, without the least intimation of the old quarrel. It was the best way to say nothing of it. Their talk is;

1. About Jacob's retinue, *ver.* 5, 6, 7. eleven or twelve little ones followed Jacob close, the eldest of them not fourteen years old, Who are these? saith Esau. Jacob had sent him an account of the increase of his estate, *chap.* xxxii. 5. but made no mention of his children, perhaps because he would not expose them to his rage, if he should meet him as an enemy, or would please him with the surprizing sight if he should meet him as a friend: Esau therefore had reason to ask who are those with thee; to which common question Jacob returns a serious answer, such as became his character, they are *the children which God hath graciously given thy servant*. It had been a sufficient answer to the question, and fit enough to be given to prophane Esau, if he had only said, They are my children, but then Jacob had not spoken like himself, like a man whose eyes were ever towards the Lord. Note, It becomes us not only to do common actions, but to speak of them after a godly sort, 3 *John* 6. Jacob speaks of his children, 1. As God's gifts; they are a *heritage of the Lord*, *Psal.* cxlvii. 3. —cxliii. 9.—cvii. 41. 2. As choice gifts; he hath graciously given them. Tho' they were many, and now much his care, and as yet but slenderly provided for, yet he accounts them great blessings; his wives and children hereupon come up in order, and pay their devours to Esau, as he had done before them, *ver.* 6; 7. for it becomes the family to shew respect to those whom the master of the family shews respect to.

2. About the present he had sent him. 1. Esau modestly refused it, because he had enough, and did not need it, *ver.* 9. Note, Men of honour will not seem to be mercenary in their friendship: whatever influence Jacob's present had upon Esau to pacify him, he would not have it thought that it had any, and therefore he refused it. His reason is, I have enough, I have much; so the word is; so much that he was not willing to take any thing that was his brother's. Note, (1.) Many that come short of spiritual blessings, and are out of covenant, yet have much of this world's wealth. Esau had what was promised him, the fatness of the earth, and a livelihood by his sword. (2.) It is a good thing for those that have much to know that they have enough, tho' they have not so much as some others have. Even Esau can say, I have enough. (3.) Those that are content with what they have, must shew it by not coveting what others have. Esau bids Jacob keep what he had to himself, supposing he had more need of it; Esau, for his part, needs it not, either to supply him, for he was rich, or to pacify him, for he was reconciled; we should take heed lest at any time our covetousness impose upon others courtesy, and meanly take advantage of their generosi-

ty. 2. Jacob lovingly urges him to accept it, and prevails, *ver.* 10, 11. Jacob sent it for fear, *chap.* xxxii. 20. but the fear being over he now importunes his acceptance of it for love, to shew that he desired his brother's friendship, and did not only dread his wrath; two things he urges, 1. The mighty satisfaction he had in his brother's favour, which he thought himself bound to make this thankful acknowledgment of. It is a very high compliment he passeth upon him, *I have seen thy face, as tho' I had seen the face of God*, i. e. I have seen thee reconciled to me, and at peace with me, as I desire to see God reconciled. Or, the meaning is, that Jacob saw God's favour to him in Esau's: it was a token for good to him that God had accepted his prayers. Note, (1.) Creature-comforts are then comforts indeed to us when they are granted as answers to prayer, and are tokens of our acceptance with God. (2.) It is matter of great joy to those that are of a loving peaceable disposition to recover the friendship of their relations that they have been at variance with. 2. The competency he had of this world's goods, *God has dealt graciously with me*. Note, If what we have in this world increase under our hands, we must take notice of it with thankfulness to the glory of God, and own that therein he has dealt graciously with us; better than we deserve: it is he that gives *power to get wealth*, *Deut.* viii. 18. He adds, and I have enough; I have all, so the word is. Esau's enough was much, but Jacob's enough was all. Note, A godly man, tho' he have but little in the world, yet may truly say he has all, because he has the God of all, and has all in him: *all is yours if you be Christs*, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22. He has the *comfort of all*; *I have all and abound*, *Phil.* iv. 18. He that hath much would have more, but he that thinks he has all is sure he has enough. He has all in prospect; he will have all shortly when he comes to Heaven; upon this principle Jacob urged Esau, and he took his present. Note, It is an excellent thing when mens religion makes them generous: free-hearted and open-handed, scorning to do a thing that is paltry and sneaking.

3. About the progress of their journey. In which,

1. Esau offers himself to be his guide, and companion, in token of sincere reconciliation, *ver.* 12. We never find, that Jacob and Esau were so loving and sociable with one another as they were now. Note, As for God his work is perfect. He made Esau not only not an enemy, but a friend. This bone that had been broke being well set became stronger than ever. Esau is become fond of Jacob's company, courts him to mount Seir; let us never despair of any, nor distrust God in whose hand all hearts are. Yet Jacob saw cause modestly to refuse this offer, *ver.* 13, 14. wherein he shews a tender concern for his own family and flocks, like a good shepherd, and a good father. He must consider the children, and the flocks with young, and not lead the one or drive the other too fast. This prudence and tenderness of Jacob ought to be imitated by those that have the care and charge of young people in the things of God. They must not be over-driven at first, by heavy tasks in religious services, but led as they can bear making their work as easy to them as possible. Christ, the good shepherd, doth so, *Isa.* xl. 11. Now Jacob will neither desire Esau to slacken his pace, nor force his family to quicken theirs, nor leave them, to keep company with his brother, as many would have done that love any society better than those of their own house: but he desires Esau to march before, and promises to follow him leisurely as he could get forward. Note, It is an unreasonable thing to tie others to our rate; we may come with comfort at last to the same journey's end, tho' we do not journey together, either in the same path, or, on the same pace. There may be those with whom we cannot fall in, and yet with whom we need not fall out by the way. Jacob intimates to him that it was his present design to come to him to mount Seir, and we may presume he did so, after he had settled his family and concerns elsewhere, tho' that visit be not recorded. Note, When we have happily recovered peace with our friends, we must take care to cultivate it, and not to be behind-hand with them in civilities.

2. Esau offers some of his men to be his guard and convoy, *ver.* 15. He saw Jacob but poorly attended, no servants but his husbandmen and shepherds, no pages or footmen, and therefore thinking he was as desirous as himself (if he could afford it) to take state upon him, and look great, he would needs lend him some of his retinue, to attend upon him, that he might appear like Esau's brother: but Jacob humbly refuseth his offer, only desiring he would not take it amiss, that he did not accept it, What needs it? 1. Jacob is humble and needs it not for state; he desires not to make a fair shew in the flesh, by encumbering himself with a needless retinue. Note, It is the vanity of pomp and grandeur that it is attended with a great deal of which it may be said; What needs it? 2. Jacob is under the divine protection, and needs it not for safety. Note, Those are sufficiently guarded that have God for their guard, and are under a convoy of his hosts, as Jacob was. They need not be beholden to an arm of flesh, that have God for their arm every morning. Jacob adds, only *let me find grace in the sight of my Lord*, having thy favour I have all I need, all I desire from thee. If Jacob thus valued the goodwill of a brother, much more reason have we to reckon that we have enough, if we have the good-will of our God.



16. So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.  
17. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. 18. And Jacob came to Shalem a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city. 19. And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor Shechems father, for an hundred pieces of money. 20. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.

Here, 1. Jacob comes to Succoth; having in a friendly manner parted with Esau, who was gone to his own country, *ver.* 16. he comes to a place where it should seem he rested for some time, set up booths for his cattle, and other conveniences for himself and family. The place was afterwards known by the name of Succoth, a city in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan, it signifies booths: that when his posterity afterwards dwelt in houses of stone, they might remember that the Syrian ready to perish was their father, who was glad of booths, *Deut.* xxvi. 5. such was the rock whence they were hewn.

2. He comes to Shechem, we read it, to Shalem, a city of Shechem; the critics generally incline to read it appellatively, he came safe, or in peace, to the city of Shechem: after a perillous journey, in which he had met with many difficulties he came safe at last into Canaan. Note, Diseases and dangers should teach us how to value health and safety, and should help to enlarge our hearts in thankfulness, when our going out and coming in has been signally preserved.

Here, 1. He buys a field, *ver.* 19. Though the land of Canaan was his by promise, yet the time for taking possession being not yet come, he is content to pay for his own, to prevent disputes with the present occupants. Note, Dominion is not founded in grace. Those that have Heaven on free-cost must not expect to have earth so.

2. He builds an altar, *ver.* 20. (1.) in thankfulness to God for the good hand of his providence over him. He did not content himself with verbal acknowledgments of God's favour to him, but made real ones. (2.) That he might keep up religion, and the worship of God in his family. Note, Where we have a tent God must have an altar: where we have a house he must have a church in it. He dedicated this altar to the honour of El-elohe-Israel, God the God of Israel. To the honour of God in general, the only living and true God, the best of being and first of causes, and to the honour of the God of Israel, as a God in covenant with him. Note, In our worship of God we must be guided and governed by the joint discoveries both of natural and revealed religion. God had lately called him by the name of Israel, and now he calls God the God of Israel; tho' he be stiled a prince with God, God shall still be a prince with him, his Lord and his God. Note, Our honours then become honours indeed to us, when they are consecrated to God's honour; Israel's God is Israel's glory.

## CHAP. XXXIV.

*At this chapter begins the story of Jacob's afflictions in his children, which were very great, and are recorded to shew, 1. The vanity of this world: that which is dearest to us may prove our greatest vexation, and we may meet with the greatest crosses in those things of which we said the same shall comfort us. 2. The common griefs of good people. Jacob's children circumcised, were well taught and prayed for, and had very good examples set them, yet some of them proved very untoward, for the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Grace doth not run in a blood, and yet the interrupting of the entail of that doth not cut off the entail of profession, and visible church privileges: nay, Jacob's sons tho' they were his grief in some things, yet were all taken into covenant with God. In this chapter we have, 1. Dinah debauched, *ver.* 1, 2—5. 2. A treaty of marriage between her and Shechem who had defiled her, *ver.* 6—19. 3. The circumcision of the Shechemites, pursuant to that treaty, *ver.* 20—24. 4. The perfidious and bloody revenge which Simeon and Levi took upon them, *ver.* 25—31.*

1. **A**ND Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. 3. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. 5. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter, (now his sons were with his

cattel in the field: ) and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

Dinah was, for ought appears, Jacob's only daughter, and we may suppose her therefore the mother's fondling, and the darling of the family, and yet she proves neither a joy nor a credit to them; for those children seldom prove either the best, or the happiest, that are most indulged. She is reckoned now but fifteen or sixteen years of age when she here occasioned so much mischief. Observe,

1. Her vain curiosity, which exposed her: she went out, perhaps unknown to her father, but by the connivance of her mother, to see the daughters of the land, *ver.* 1, probably it was at a ball, or some public day. Being an only daughter she thought herself solitary at home, having none of her own age and sex to converse with, and therefore she must needs go abroad to divert herself, and to keep her from being melancholy, and to accomplish herself by conversation, better than she could in her father's tents. Note, It is a very good thing for children to love home; it is parents wisdom to make it easy to them, and childrens duty then to be easy in it. Her pretence was to see the daughters of the land, to see how they dressed and how they danced, and what was fashionable among them: she went to see, yet that was not all, she went to be seen too: she went to see the daughters of the land, but it may be with some thoughts of the sons of the land too. I doubt she went to get acquaintance with those Canaanites, and to learn their way. Note, The pride and vanity of young people betrays them to many snares.

2. The loss of her honour by this means, *ver.* 2. *Shechem the prince of the country*, but a slave to his own lusts, took her and lay with her, it should seem not so much by force as by surprise. Note, Great men think they may do any thing; and what more mischievous than untaught and governed youth? See what came of Dinah's gadding; young women must learn to be chaste, keepers at home, they are put together, *Tit.* ii. 5. for those that are not keepers at home expose their chastity. Dinah went abroad to look about her, but if she had looked about her, as she ought, she had not fallen into this snare. Note, The beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water. How great a matter doth a little fire kindle? We should therefore carefully avoid all occasions of sin, and approaches to it.

3. The court Shechem made to her after he had defiled her. This was fair and commendable, and made the best of bad, he loved her, not as Amnon, 2 *Sam.* xiii. 15. and he engaged his father to make a match for him with her, *ver.* 3, 4.

4. The tidings of this brought to poor Jacob, *ver.* 5. As soon as his children grew up, they began to be a grief to him: let not godly parents that are lamenting the miscarriages of their children think their case singular or unprecedented. The good man held his peace, as one astonished that knows not what to say: or, he said nothing for fear of saying amiss, as David, *Psal.* xxxix. 1, 2. he smothered his resentments, lest if he had suffered them to break out they should have transported him into any indecencies. Or, it should seem he had left the management of his affairs very much (too much I doubt) to his sons, and he would do nothing without them; or, at least he knew they would be uneasy to him if he did) they having shewed themselves of late upon all occasions bold, forward, and assuming. Note, Things never go well, when the authority of a parent runs low in a family. Let every man bear rule in his own house, and have his children in subjection with all gravity.

6. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7. And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it, and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth: because he had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacobs daughter; which thing ought not to be done. 8. And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. 9. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade you therein, and get you possessions therein. 11. And Shechem said unto her father, and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. 12. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. 13. And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, (because he had defiled Dinah their sister). 14. And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised: for that were a reproach unto us. 15. But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised. 16. Then will we give our daughters



daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

Jacob's sons, when they heard of the injury done to Dinah, shewed a very great resentment of it, perhaps rather out of a jealousy for the honour of their family than a sense of virtue. Many are concerned at the shamefulnes of sin, that never lay to heart the sinfulness of it.

It is here called *folly in Israel*, ver. 7. according to the language of after-times, for Israel was not yet a people, but a family only. Note, 1. Uncleanneſs is folly, for it sacrificeth the favour of God, the peace of conscience, and all the soul can pretend to that is sacred and honourable to a base and brutish lust. 2. This folly is most shameful in Israel, in a family of Israel, where God is known and worshipped as he was in Jacob's tents, by the name of the God of Israel. Folly in Israel is scandalous indeed. 3. It is a good thing to have sin put into an ill name: uncleanneſs is here proverbially called *folly in Israel*, 2 Sam. xiii. 12. Dinah is here called Jacob's daughter for warning to all the daughters of Israel, that they betray not themselves to this folly.

Hamor came to treat with Jacob himself, but he turns them over to his sons; and here we have a particular account of the treaty, in which it is a shame to say the Canaanites were more honest than the Israelites.

1. Hamor and Shechem fairly propose this match in order to a coalition in trade: Shechem is deeply in love with Dinah, he will have her upon any terms, ver. 11, 12. His father not only consents but solicits for him, and gravely insists upon the advantages that would follow from the union of the families, ver. 9, 10. He shews no jealousy of Jacob, tho' he were a stranger, but rather an earnest desire to settle a correspondence with him and his family, making him that generous offer, the land shall be before you, trade you therein.

2. Jacob's sons basely pretend to insist upon a coalition in religion, when really they designed nothing less. If Jacob had taken the management of this affair into his own hands, it is probable he and Hamor would soon have concluded it, but Jacob's sons meditate only revenge, and a very strange project they have to compass it: the Shechemites must be circumcised; not to make them holy, they never intended that, but to make them fore, that they might become an easier prey to their sword.

1. The pretence was specious: it is the honour of Jacob's family, that they carry about with them the token of God's covenant with them, and it will be a reproach to them that were thus dignified and distinguished to enter into such a strict alliance with them that were *uncircumcised*, ver. 14. and therefore if you will be circumcised then we will become *one people with you*, ver. 15, 16. Had they been sincere herein, their proposal of these terms had been very commendable: For, (1.) Israelites should not intermarry with Canaanites, professors with profane; it is a great sin, or, at least, the cause and inlet of a great deal, and has oft been of pernicious consequence. (2.) The interest we have in any persons, and the hold we have of them, should be wisely improved by us, to bring them to the love and practice of religion. He that wins souls is wise; but then we must not, like Jacob's sons, think it enough to persuade them to submit to the external rites of religion, but must endeavour to convince them of it's reasonableness, and to bring them acquainted with the power of it.

2. The intention was malicious; as appears by the sequel of the story; all they aimed at was to prepare them for the day of slaughter. Note, Bloody designs have oft been covered and carried on with a pretence of religion; thus they have been accomplished most plausibly, and most securely: but this dissembled piety is doubtless double iniquity. Religion is never more injured, nor God's sacraments more prophaned than when they are thus used for a cloak of maliciousness. Nay, if Jacob's sons had not had this bloody design, I do not see how they could justify their offering the sacred sign of circumcision, the seal of God's covenant, to these devoted Canaanites who had no part nor lot in the matter. They had no right to the seal that had no right to the promise; *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and cast it to dogs*: But Jacob's sons valued not this, while they could make it serve their turn.

18. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamors son. 19. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacobs daughter: and he was more honourable then all the house of his father. 20. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21. These men are peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell in the land and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them: let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22. Only herein will the men consent unto us, for to dwell with

us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. 23. Shall not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24. And unto Hamor, and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city: and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

Here 1. Hamor and Shechem gave consent themselves to be circumcised, ver. 18, 19. To this perhaps they were moved not only by the strong desire they had to bring about this match, but by what they might have heard of the sacred and honourable intentions of this sign, in the family of Abraham, which it is probable they had some confused notions of, and of the promises confirmed by it; which made them the more desirous to incorporate with the family of Jacob, *Zech. 8. 22.* Note (1.) Many who know little of religion, yet know so much of it as makes them willing to join themselves with those that are religious. (2.) If a man would take upon him a form of religion to gain a good wife, much more should we embrace the power of it, to gain the favour of a good God; even *circumcise our hearts to love him*, and, as Shechem here, *not defer to do the thing*. They gained the consent of the men of their city, Jacob's sons requiring that they also should be circumcised. (1.) They themselves had a great influence upon them, by their command and example. Note, Religion would greatly prevail, if those in authority, who, like Shechem, are more honourable than their neighbours, would appear forward and zealous for it. (2.) They urged an argument which was very cogent, ver. 23. *Shall not their cattle, and their substance be ours?* They observed that Jacob's sons were industrious, thriving, people, promised themselves and their neighbours advantage by an alliance with them. It would improve ground and trade, and bring money into their country. Now, 1. It was bad enough to marry upon this principle, yet we see covetousness the greatest matchmaker in the world, and nothing designed so much with many as the laying of house to house, and field to field, without regard had to any other consideration. 2. It was worse to be circumcised upon this principle. The Shechemites will embrace the religion of Jacob's family, only in hopes of interesting themselves thereby in the riches of that family. Thus there are many with whom gain is godliness, and who are more governed and influenced by their secular interest than by any principle of their religion.

25. And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinahs brethren, took each man his sword; and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. 26. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechems house, and went out. 27. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, 29. And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. 30. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, amongst the Canaanites, and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me, and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. 31. And they said, Should he deal with our sister, as with an harlot?

Here we have Simeon and Levi, two of Jacob's sons, young men not much above twenty years old, cutting the throats of the Shechemites, and thereby breaking the heart of their good father.

1. Here is the barbarous murder of the Shechemites; Jacob himself was used to the sheep-hook, but his sons had got swords by their sides, as if they had been the seed of Esau, who was to *live by his sword*; we have them here,

(1.) Slaying the inhabitants of Shechem: all the males, Hamor and Shechem particularly with whom they had been treating in a friendly manner, but the other day, yet with a design upon their lives. Some think all Jacob's sons, when they wheedled the Shechemites to be circumcised, designed to take advantage of their foreneſs, and to rescue Dinah from among them, but Simeon and Levi, not content with that, would revenge the injury, and they did it with a witness. Now, (1.) It cannot be denied but that God was righteous in it. Had the Shechemites been circumcised in obedience to any command of God, their circumcision would have been their protection, but when they submitted to that sacred rite only to serve a turn, to please their prince, and to enrich themselves,



themselves, it was just with God to bring this upon them. Note, As nothing secures us better than true religion, so nothing exposes us more than religion only pretended to. (2.) But Simeon and Levi were most unrighteous.

1. It was true, that Shechem had wrought folly against Israel, in defiling Dinah, but it ought to have been considered how far Dinah herself had been accessory to it. Had Shechem abused her in her own mother's tent, it had been another matter, but she went upon his ground, and perhaps by her indecent carriage, had struck the spark which begun the fire; when we are severe upon the sinner, we ought to consider who was the tempter.

2. It was true, that Shechem had done ill, but he was endeavouring to atone for it by his after-respects, and was as honest and honourable, *ex post facto*, as the case would admit: it was not the case of the Levite's concubine that was abused to death, nor doth he justify what he hath done, but courts a reconciliation upon any terms.

3. It was true, that Shechem had done ill, but what was that to all the Shechemites? Doth one man sin, and will they be wroth with all the town? Must the innocent fall with the guilty? This was barbarous indeed.

4. But that which above all aggravated the cruelty, was the most perfidious treachery that was in it. The Shechemites had submitted to their conditions, and had done that upon which they had promised to become one people with them, *ver. 16.* yet they act as sworn enemies to those to whom they were lately become sworn friends, making as light of their covenant, as they did of the laws of humanity: And are these the sons of Israel? *Cursed be their anger for it was fierce.*

5. This also added to the crime that they made a holy ordinance of God subservient to their wicked design, so making that odious; as if it were not enough for them, to shame themselves and their family, they bring a reproach upon that honourable badge of their religion; justly would it be called a bloody ordinance.

(2.) Seizing the prey of Shechem, and plundering the town: They rescued Dinah, *ver. 26.* and if that was all they came for, they might done that without blood, as appears by their own shewing, *ver. 17.* but they aimed at the spoil; and though Simeon and Levi only were the murderers, yet it is intimated that others of the sons of Jacob *came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, ver. 27.* and so became accessory to the murder; in them it was manifest injustice, yet here we may observe the righteousness of God: The Shechemites were willing to gratify the sons of Jacob, by submitting to the penance of circumcision upon this principle, *Shall not their cattle and their substance be ours, ver. 23.* And see what was the issue, instead of making themselves masters of the wealth of Jacob's family, Jacob's family becomes masters of their wealth. Note, Those who unjustly grasp at that which is another's, justly lose that which is their own.

2. Here is Jacob's relentment of this bloody fact of Simeon and Levi, *ver. 30.* Two things he sensibly complains of,

1. The reproach they had brought upon him thereby; *ye have troubled me, put me into a disorder, for ye have made me to sink among the inhabitants of the land, i. e. you have rendered me and my family odious among them.* What will they say of us and our religion? We shall be looked upon as the most perfidious barbarous people in the world. Note, The gross miscarriages of wicked children are the grief and shame of their godly parents. Children should be the joy of their parents, but wicked children are their trouble, sadden their hearts, break their spirits, and make them go mourning from day to day: Children should be an ornament to their parents, but wicked children are their reproach, and are as *dead flies* in their pot of ointment: but let such children know that if they repent not the grief they have caused to their parents, and the damage religion has sustained in it's reputation through them, will come into the account, and be reckoned for.

2. The ruin they had exposed him to: what could be expected but that the Canaanites, who were numerous and formidable, would confederate against him, and he and his little family would become an easy prey to them, *I shall be destroyed, I and my house:* If all the Shechemites must be destroyed for the offence of one, why not all the Israelites for the offence of two? Jacob knew indeed that God had promised to preserve and perpetuate his house, but he might justly fear that these vile practices of his children would amount to a forfeiture, and cut off the entail. Note, When sin is in the house, there is reason to fear ruin at the door. The tender parents foresee those ill consequences of sin, which the wicked children have no dread of.

One would think this should have made them to relent, and they should have humbled themselves to their good father, and begged his pardon, but instead of that they justify themselves, and give him this insolent reply, *Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?* No, he should not, but if he do, must they be their own avengers? Will nothing less than so many lives, and the ruin of a whole city serve to atone for an abuse done to one foolish girl? By their question they tacitly reflect upon their father, as if he would have been content to let them deal with his daughter as with a harlot. Note, It is common for those who run into one extremity, to reproach and censure those who keep

the mean, as if they run into the other. Those who condemn the rigor of revenge, shall be misrepresented, as if they countenanced and justified the offence.

## C H A P. XXXV.

*In this chapter we have three communions, and three funerals.*

1. *Three communions between God and Jacob.* 1. God ordered Jacob to Beth-el, and in obedience to that order he purged his house of idols, and prepared for that journey, *ver. 1—5.* 2. Jacob built an altar at Beth-el to the honour of God that had appeared to him, and in performance of his vow, *ver. 6, 7.* 3. God appeared to him again, and confirmed the change of his name, and the covenant with him, *ver. 9—13.* of which appearance Jacob made a grateful acknowledgment, *ver. 14, 15.* 2. *Three funerals,* 1. Deborah's, *ver. 8.* 2. Rachel's, *ver. 16—20.* 3. Isaac's, *ver. 27—29.* Here is also Reuben's incest, *ver. 22,* and an account of Jacob's sons, *ver. 23—26.*

1. **A**ND God said unto Jacob, Arise, Go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. 2. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: 3. And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. 4. And they gave unto Jacob, all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their ear-rings, which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak, which was by Shechem, 5. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

Here, 1. God minds Jacob of his vow at Beth-el, and sends him thither to perform it, *ver. 1.* Jacob had said in the day of his distress, *If I come again in peace, this stone shall be God's house,* chap. xxviii. 22. God had performed his part of the bargain, and had given Jacob more than bread to eat, and raiment to put on, he had got an estate, and was become two bands, but it should seem he had forgotten his vow, or at least had too long deferred the performance of it. Seven or eight years it was now since he came to Canaan; he had purchased ground there, and had built an altar in remembrance of God's last appearance to him when he called him Israel, chap. xxxiii. 19, 20. but Beth-el still is forgotten. Note, Time is apt to wear out the sense of mercies, and the impressions made upon us by them; it should not be so, but so it is. God had exercised Jacob with a very sore affliction in his family, chap. xxxiv. to see if that would bring his vow to his remembrance, and put him upon the performance of it, but it had not that effect; therefore God comes himself and puts him in mind of it, *Arise, go to Beth-el* Note, 1. As many as God loves, he will remind of neglected duties one way or other, by conscience or providences. 2. When we have vowed a vow to God, it is best not to defer the payment of it, (*Eccles. v. 4.*) yet better late than never. God bid him go to Beth-el and dwell there, *i. e.* not only go himself, but take his family with him, that they might join with him in his devotions. Note, In Beth-el, the house of God, we should desire to dwell, *Psal. xxvii. 4.* That should be our home, not our inn. God minds him not expressly of his vow, but of the occasion of it, when *thou fleddest from the face of Esau.* Note, The remembrance of former afflictions should bring to mind the workings of our souls under them, *Psal. lxvi. 13, 14.*

2. Jacob commands his household to prepare for this solemnity; not only for the journey and remove, but for the religious services that were to be performed, *ver. 2, 3.* Note, 1. Before solemn ordinances, there must be solemn preparation, *Wash ye, make ye clean, and then come and let us reason together,* Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. 2. Masters of families should use their authority for the promoting of religion in their families: Not only we, but our houses also should serve the Lord, *Jos. xxiv. 15.* Observe the commands he gives his household, like Abraham, *Gen. xviii. 19.* (1.) They must *put away the strange gods.* Strange gods in Jacob's family! strange things indeed! Could such a family that was taught the good knowledge of the Lord admit them? Could such a master, to whom God had *appeared twice,* and oftener, connive at them? Doubtless this was his infirmity. Note, Those that are good themselves, cannot have those about them so good as they should be. In those families where there is a face of religion, and an altar to God, yet many times there is much amiss, and more *strange gods* than one would suspect. In Jacob's family Rachel had her Teraphim, which it is to be feared, she secretly made some superstitious use of. The captives of Shechem brought their gods along with them, and perhaps Jacob's sons took some with the plunder. However they came by them, now they must *put them away.* (2.) They must *be clean, and change their garments:* they must observe a decorum, and make the best appearance they could?



could; Simeon and Levi had their hands full of blood, it concerned them to wash, and to put off their garments that were so stained. These were but ceremonies, signifying the purification of the heart, and the change of that: What is clean cloaths, and new cloaths, without a clean heart, and a new heart? Dr Lightfoot, by their *being clean*, or *washing* them, understands Jacob's admission of the proselytes of Shechem and Syria into his religion by baptism, because circumcision was become odious. (3.) They must go with him to Beth-el, *ver. 3.* Note, Masters of families when they go up to the house of God, should bring their families with them.

3. His family surrenders all they had that was idolatrous, or superstitious, *ver. 4.* Perhaps if Jacob had called for them sooner, they had sooner parted with them, being convicted by their own consciences of the vanity of them. Note, Sometimes attempts for reformation succeed better than one could have expected, and people are not so obstinate against them as we feared. Jacob's servants, and even the retainers to his family, gave him all the strange gods, and the ear-rings they wore, either as charm, or the honour of their gods, they parted with all. Note, Reformation is not sincere, if it be not universal. We may hope they parted with them cheerfully, and without reluctance, as Ephraim did when he said, *What have I to do any more with idols?* Hof. xiv. 8. or that people that said to their idols, *Get ye hence*, Isa. xxx. 22. Jacob took care to bury their images, we may suppose in some place unknown to them, that they might not afterwards find them and return to them. Note, We must be wholly separated from our sins, as we are from those that are dead, and buried out of our sight; cast them *to the moles and the bats*, Isa. ii. 20.

4. He removes without molestation, from Shechem to Beth-el, *ver. 5.* *The terror of God was upon the cities.* Though the Canaanites were much exasperated against the sons of Jacob for their barbarous usage of the Shechemites, yet they were so restrained by a divine power, that they could not take this fair opportunity which now offered itself, when they were upon their march, to avenge their neighbours quarrel. Note, The way of duty is the way of safety. While there was sin in Jacob's house he was afraid of his neighbours, but now the strange gods were put away, and they were all going together to Beth-el, his neighbours were afraid of him. When we are about God's work we are under special protection: God is with us while we are with him, and if he be for us who can be against us. See Exod. xxxiv. 24. *No man shall desire thy land, when thou goest up to appear before the Lord.* God governs the world more by secret terrors on mens minds than we are aware of.

6. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (that is Beth-el) he and all the people that were with him. 7. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. 8. But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Beth-el, under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth. 9. And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram; and blessed him. 10. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel. 11. And God said unto him, I am God almighty; be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee: and kings shall come out of thy loins. 12. And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. 13. And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him. 14. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. 15. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him Beth-el.

Jacob and his retinue being come safe to Beth-el, we are here told what passed there.

1. There he built an altar, *ver. 7.* and no doubt offered sacrifice upon it, perhaps the tenth of his cattle, according to his vow, *I will give the tenth unto thee.* With these sacrifices he joined praises for former mercies, particularly that which the sight of the place brought fresh to his remembrance, and prayers for the continuance of God's favour to him and his family. And he called the place, *i. e.* the altar, El-Beth-el, the God of Beth-el. As when he made a thankful acknowledgment of the honour God had lately done him in calling him Israel, he worshipped God by the name of El-Elohe, Israel, so now he was making a grateful recognition of God's former favour to him at Beth-el he worships God by the name of El-Beth-el; the God of Beth-el, because there God appeared to him. Note, The comfort which the saints have in holy ordinances is not so much from Beth-el the house of God, as from El-Beth-el, the God of the house. The ordi-

nances are but empty things if we do not meet with God in them.

2. There he buried Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, *ver. 8.* we have reason to think that Jacob after he came to Canaan, while his family dwelt near Shechem, went himself (it is likely often) to visit his father Isaac, at Hebron. Rebekah probably was dead, but her old nurse (of whom mention is made chap. xxiv. 59.) survived her, and Jacob took her to his family, to be a companion to his wives, her country-women, and an instructor to his children; while they were at Beth-el, she died, and died lamented, so much lamented, that the oak under which she was buried was called Allon-bachuth, the oak of weeping. Note, (1.) Old servants in a family that have in their time been faithful and useful, ought to be respected. Honour was done to this nurse at her death by Jacob's family, though she was not related to them, and though she was aged. Former services in such a case must be remembered. (2.) We do not know where death may meet us, perhaps at Beth-el, the house of God. Therefore let us be always ready. (3.) Family afflictions may come even then, when family reformation and religion is on foot. Therefore rejoice with trembling.

3. There God appeared to him, *ver. 9.* to own his altar, and to answer to the name by which he had called him, *The God of Beth-el*, *ver. 7.* and to comfort him under his affliction, *ver. 8.* Note, God will appear to them in a way of grace, that attend on him in a way of duty.

Here, (1.) He confirmed the change of his name, *ver. 10.* It was done before by the angel that wrestled with him, chap. xxxii. 28, and here it was ratified by the divine Majesty, or Shechinah, that appeared to him. There it was to encourage him against the fear of Esau, here against the fear of the Canaanites. Who can be too hard for Israel, a prince with God? It is below those who are thus dignified to droop and despond.

(2.) He renewed and ratified the covenant with him, by the name of El-Shaddai. *I am God almighty: God all-sufficient*, (*ver. 11.*) able to make good the promise in due time, and to support thee and provide for thee in the mean time. Two things are promised him which we have met with often before. (1.) That he should be the father of a great nation; great in number, *a company of nations shall be of thee*; every tribe of Israel was a nation, and all the twelve a company of nations: great in honour and power, *Kings shall come out of thy loins.* 2. That he should be the master of a good land, *ver. 12.* described by the grantees, Abraham and Isaac, to whom it was promised, not by the occupants, the Canaanites in whose possession it now was. The land that was given to Abraham and Isaac is here entailed on Jacob and his seed. He shall not have children without an estate, which is often the care of the poor; nor an estate without children, which is often the grief of the rich; but both. These two promises had a spiritual signification, which we may suppose Jacob himself had some notion of, though not so clear and distinct as we now have; for without doubt Christ is the promised seed, and Heaven is the promised land; the former is the foundation, and the latter the top-stone of all God's favours.

(3.) He then went up from him, (or from over him) in some visible display of glory, which had hovered over him, while he talked with him, *ver. 13.* Note, The sweetest communions the saints have with God in this world are short and transient, and soon have an end. Our vision of God in Heaven will be everlasting; there we shall be ever with the Lord, it is not so here.

4. There he erected a memorial of this, *ver. 14.* (1.) He set up a pillar. When he was going to Padan-aram he set up that stone, which he had laid his head on for a pillar, that was agreeable enough to his low condition, and his hasty flight, but now he took time to erect one more stately, more distinguishable, and durable, probably inserting that stone into it. And in token of his intending it for a sacred memorial of his communion with God, he poured oil, and other the ingredients of a drink-offering, upon it. His vow was, *This stone shall be God's house, i. e.* shall be set up for his honour, as houses to the praise of their builders, and here he performs it; transferring it to God by anointing it. (2.) He confirmed the name he had formerly given to the place, (*ver. 15.*) *Beth-el, the house of God.* Yet this very place afterwards lost the honour of it's name, and became Bethaven, A house of iniquity, for here it was that Jeroboam set up one of his calves. It is impossible for the best men to entail so much as the profession and form of religion upon a place.

16. And they journeyed from Beth-el: and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. 17. And it came to pass when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. 18. And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. 19. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Beth-lehem. 20. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.



We have here the story of the death of Rachel, the beloved wife of Jacob. (1.) She fell in travail by the way, not able to reach to Bethlehem the next town, though they were near it; so suddenly doth pain sometimes come upon a woman in travail, which she cannot escape, or put off. We may suppose Jacob had soon a tent up, convenient enough for her reception. (2.) Her pains were violent. She had hard labour; harder than usual; This was the effect of sin, *Gen. iii. 16.* Note, Human life begins with sorrow, and the roses of it's joy are surrounded with thorns. (3.) The midwife encouraged her, *ver. 17.* No doubt she had her midwife with her, ready at hand, yet that would not secure her. Rachel had said, when she bore Joseph, *God shall add another son*, which now the midwife remembers, and tells her her words were made good. Yet this did not avail to keep up her spirits; unless God command away fear, no one else can. He only faith, as one having authority, fear not. We are apt in extreme perils to comfort ourselves and our friends with the hopes of a temporal deliverance, in which we may be disappointed, we had better found our comforts on that which cannot fail us, the hope of eternal life. (4.) Her travail was to the life of the child, but to her own death. Note, Though the pains and perils of child-bearing were introduced by sin, yet they have sometimes been fatal to very holy women, who though not saved in child-bearing are saved through it with an everlasting salvation. Rachel had passionately said, *Give me children, or else I die*, and now she had children (for this was her second) she died. Her dying is here called the departing of her soul. Note, The death of the body is but the departure of the soul to the world of spirits. (5.) Her dying lips called her new born son Ben-oni: the son of my sorrow. And many a son not born in such hard labour, yet proves the son of his parents sorrow, and the heaviness of her that bare him. Children are enough the sorrow of their poor mothers, in the breeding, bearing, and nursing of them, they should therefore when they grow up, study to be their joy, and so if possible to make them some amends. But Jacob because he would not renew the sorrowful remembrance of the mother's death every time he called his son by his name, changed his name, and called him Benjamin, The son of my right hand, *i. e.* very dear to me; set on my right hand for a right hand blessing; the support of my age like the staff in my right hand. (6.) Jacob buried her near the place where she died; dying in child-bed it was convenient to bury her quickly, and therefore he did not bring her to the burying-place of his family. If the soul be at rest after death, the matter is not great where the body lies. In the place where the tree falls there let it be. No mention is made of the mourning that was at her death, because that might easily be taken for granted. Jacob no doubt was a true mourner. Note, Great afflictions sometimes befall us immediately after great comforts. Left Jacob should be lifted up with the visions of the almighty he was honoured with, this was sent as a thorn in the flesh to humble him. Those that enjoy the favours peculiar to the children of God, must yet expect the troubles that are common to the children of men. Deborah (who had she lived would have been a comfort to Rachel in her extremity) died but a little before. Note, When death comes into a family it often strikes double. God by it speaks once, yea twice. The Jewish writers say, The death of Deborah and Rachel was to expiate the murder of the Shechemites, occasioned by Dinah a daughter of the family. Lastly, Observe, That Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave, so that it was known long after to be Rachel's sepulchre, *1 Sam. x. 2.* and providence so ordered it that this place afterwards fell in the lot of Benjamin. Jacob set up a pillar in remembrance of his joys, *ver. 14.* and here he set up one in remembrance of his sorrows; for as it may be of use to ourselves to keep both in mind, so it may be of use to others to transmit the memorials of both: the church long after owned that what God said to Jacob at Beth-el, both by his word and by his rod, he intended for their instruction, *Hof. xii. 4.* *There he spake with us.*

21. And Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. 22. And it came to pass when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. 23. The sons of Leah; Reuben Jacobs first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun. 24. The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin. 25. And the sons of Bilhah, Rachels handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali. 26. And the sons of Zilpah, Leahs handmaid; Gad, and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram. 27. And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah (which is Hebron) where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. 28. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. 29. And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Here is, 1. Jacob's remove, *ver. 21.* He also, as his fathers, sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, and was

not long in a place. Immediately after the story of Rachel's death he is here called Israel, *ver. 21, 22;* and not often so after: the Jews say the historian doth him this honour here, because he bore that affliction with such admirable patience and submission to providence. Note, Those are Israels, indeed, princes with God, that support the government of their own passions. He that has this rule over his own spirit is better than the mighty. Israel, a prince with God, yet dwells in tents; the city is reserved for him in the other world.

2. The sin of Reuben; a piece of abominable wickedness it was that he was guilty of; that very sin which the apostle saith; *1 Cor. v. 1.* is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife, *ver. 22.* It is said to be when Israel dwelt in that land, as if he were then absent from his family, which might be the unhappy occasion of these disorders. Though perhaps Bilhah was the greater criminal, and it is probable was abandoned by Jacob for it, yet Reuben's crime was so provoking that for it he lost his birthright and blessing, chap. xlix. 4. The first born is not always the best, nor the most promising: This was Reuben's sin, but it was Jacob's affliction, and what a fore affliction it was is intimated in a little compass, and Israel heard it. No more is said, that is enough, he heard it with the utmost grief and shame, horror and displeasure. Reuben thought to conceal it, that his father should never hear it; but those that promise themselves secrecy in sin are generally disappointed, a bird of the air carries the voice.

3. A compleat list of the sons of Jacob, now Benjamin the youngest was born. This is the first time that we have the names of these heads of the twelve tribes together, afterwards we find them very often spoken of and enumerated, even to the end of the Bible, *Rev. vii. 4.—xxi. 12.*

4. The visit which Jacob made to his father Isaac at Hebron. We may suppose he had visited him before since his return, for he *fore longed after his father's house*, but never till now brought his family to settle with him, or near him, *ver. 27.* Probably he did this now upon the death of Rebekah, by which Isaac was left solitary, and not disposed to marry again.

5. The age and death of Isaac, are here recorded, though it appear by computation, that he died not till many years after Joseph was sold into Egypt, and much about the time that he was preferred there. Isaac a mild quiet man lived the longest of all the patriarchs, for he was one hundred and eighty years old, Abraham was but one hundred and seventy-five. Isaac lived about forty years after he had made his will, chap. xxvii. 2. We shall not die an hour the sooner, but abundance the better, for our timely setting of our heart and house in order. Particular notice is taken of the amicable agreement of Esau and Jacob, in solemnizing their father's funeral, *ver. 29,* to shew how God had wonderfully changed Esau's mind, since he vowed his brother's murder immediately upon his father's death, chap. xxvii. 41. Note, God has many ways of preventing ill men from doing the mischief they intended, he can either tie their hands, or turn their hearts.

## C H A P. XXXVI.

*In this chapter we have an account of the posterity of Esau, who from him were called Edomites; that Esau who sold his birthright, and lost his blessing, and was not loved of God as Jacob was. Here is a brief register kept of his family for some generations. (1.) Because he was the son of Isaac, for whose sake this honour is put upon him. (2.) Because the Edomites were neighbours to Israel, and their genealogy would be of use to give light to the following stories of what passed between them. (3.) It is to shew the performance of the promise to Abraham, that he should be the father of many nations, and of that answer which Rebekah had from the oracle she consulted, Two nations are in thy womb, and of the blessing of Isaac, Thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth. Here is, 1. Esau's wives, ver. 1—5. 2. His remove to mount Seir, ver. 6—8. 3. The names of his sons, ver. 9—14. 4. The dukes which descended of his sons, ver. 15—19. 5. The dukes of the Horites, ver. 20—30. 6. The kings and dukes of Edom, ver. 31, ad fin. Little more is recorded but their names only, because the history of those that were out of the church, though perhaps it might have been serviceable in Politics, yet would have been of little use in Divinity. It is in the church that the memorable instances are found of special grace, and special providence, for that is the inclosure, the rest is common. This chapter is abridged, 1 Chron. i. 35, &c.*

1. **N**OW these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. 2. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibama the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite: 3. And Bashemath Ishmaels daughter, sister of Nebajoth. 4. And Adah bare to Esau, Eliphaz: and Bashemath bare Reuel. 5. And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah:



Korah : These are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan. 6. And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattel, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country, from the face of his brother Jacob. 7. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together : and the land wherein they were strangers, could not bear them, because of their cattel. 8. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir : Esau is Edom.

Observe here, (1.) Concerning Esau himself, *ver.* 1. That he is called Edom (and again, *ver.* 8.) that name by which was perpetuated the remembrance of the foolish bargain he made, when he sold his birth-right for that red, that red pottage. The very mention of that name is enough to intimate the reason why his family is turned off with such a short account. Note, If men do an ill thing, they must thank themselves when it is long after remembered against them to their reproach.

(2.) Concerning his wives, and the children they bore him in the land of Canaan. He had three wives, and, by them all, but five sons : Many a one has more by one wife. God in his providence often disappoints those who take indirect courses to build up a family ; yet here the promise prevailed, and Esau's family was built up.

(3.) Concerning his remove to mount Seir, which was the country God had given him for a possession when he reserved Canaan for the seed of Jacob. God owns it long after, *I gave to Esau mount Seir*, Deut. ii. 5. Jos. xxiv. 4. which was the reason why the Edomites must not be disturbed in their possession. Those that have not a right by promise, such as Jacob had to Canaan, may have a very good title by providence to their estates, such as Esau had to mount Seir. Esau had begun to settle among his wives relations, in Seir, before Jacob came from Padan-aram, *chap.* xxxii. 3. Isaac it is likely had sent him thither (as Abraham in his life-time had sent the sons of the concubines from Isaac his son into the east-country, *chap.* xxv. 6.) that Jacob might have the clearer way made him to the possession of the promised land : but probably during the life of Isaac, Esau had still some effects remaining in Canaan. But after his death he wholly withdrew to mount Seir, took with him what came to his share of his father's personal estate, and left Canaan to Jacob ; not only because he had the promise of it, but because he saw if they should both continue to thrive, as they had began, there would not be room for both. *Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir*, *ver.* 8. Note, Whatever opposition may be made, God's word will take place, and even those that have opposed it, will see themselves some time or other under a necessity of yielding to it, and acquiescing in it. Esau had struggled for Canaan, but now he tamely retires to mount Seir, for God's counsels shall certainly stand, concerning the times before appointed, and the *bounds of our habitation*.

9. And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites, in mount Seir. 10. These are the names of Esau's sons ; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. 11. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. 12. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son : and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek : these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife. 13. And these are the sons of Reuel ; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah : these were the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. 14. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter Zibeon, Esau's wife : and she bare to Esau, Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. 15. These were dukes of the sons of Esau : the sons of Eliphaz the first born son of Esau ; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, 16. Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek : these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz, in the land of Edom : these were the sons of Adah. 17. And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son ; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah. These are the dukes that came of Reuel, in the land of Edom : these are the sons of Basemath Esau's wife. 18. And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife ; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah : these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. 19. These are the sons Esau (who is Edom) and these are their dukes.

Observe here, 1. That only the names of Esau's sons and grand-sons are recorded. Only their names, not their history,

for it is the church that Moses preserves the records of, not of those that were without. The elders only that lived by faith obtained a good report. It is Sion that produceth the *men of renown*, not Seir, Psal. lxxxvii. 5. Nor doth the genealogy go any further than the third and fourth generation, the very names of all after are buried in oblivion ; It is only the pedigree of the Israelites, who were to be the heirs of Canaan, and of whom were to come the promised seed, and the holy seed that is drawn out to any length, as far as there was occasion for it ; even of all the tribes till Canaan was divided among them, and of the royal line till Christ came. 2. That these sons and grandsons of Esau are called Dukes, *ver.* 15—18. Probably they were military commanders, dukes, or captains, that had soldiers under them ; for Esau and his family lived *by the sword*, *chap.* xxvii. 40. Note, Titles of honour have been more ancient out of the church than in it. Esau's sons were dukes, when Jacob's sons were but plain shepherds, *chap.* xlvii. 3. This is not a reason why such titles should not be used among Christians. But is a reason why men should not over-value themselves or others for the sake of them. There is an honour that comes from God, and a name in his house that is infinitely more valuable. Edomites may be dukes with men, but Israelites indeed are made to our God kings and priests. 3. We may suppose those dukes had numerous families of children and servants that were their dukedoms. God promised to multiply Jacob, and to enrich him, yet Esau increases and is enriched first. Note, It is no new thing for the men of this world to be full of children, and to have their bellies too *filled with the hid treasure*, Psal. xvii. 14. God's promise to Jacob began to work late, but the effect of it remained longer, and it had it's compleat accomplishment in the spiritual Israel.

20. These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land ; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, 21. And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan : these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom. 22. And the children of Lotan, were Hori, and Heman : and Lotan's sister was Timna. 23. And the children of Shobal were these ; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam, 24. And these are the children of Zibeon ; both Ajah, and Anah : this was that Anah, that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. 25. And the children of Anah were these ; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. 26. And these are the children of Dishon ; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. 27. The children of Ezer are these ; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Achan. 28. The children of Dishan are these ; Uz, and Aran. 29. These are the dukes that came of the Horites ; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, 30. Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan : these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

In the midst of this genealogy of the Edomites, here is inserted the genealogy of the Horites, those Canaanites, or Hittites (compare *Gen.* xxvi. 34.) that were the natives of mount Seir. Mention is made of them, *Gen.* xiv. 6. and of their interest in mount Seir before the Edomites took possession of it, *Deut.* ii. 12, 22. This comes in here, not only to give light to the story, but to be a standing reflection upon the Edomites for intermarrying with them, by which it is likely they learned their way, and corrupted themselves. Esau having sold his birth-right, and lost his blessing, and entered into alliance with the Hittites, his posterity and the sons of Seir are here reckoned together. Note, Those that treacherously desert God's church, are justly numbered with those that were never in it ; apostate Edomites stand on the same ground with accursed Horites. Particular notice is taken of one Anah who fed the asses of Zibeon his father, *ver.* 20. and yet is called duke Anah, *ver.* 29. Note, Those that expect to rise high should begin low. An honourable descent should not keep men from an honest employment, nor a mean employment balk any man's preferment. This Anah was not only industrious in his business, but ingenious too, and successful, for he found mules, or (as some read it) waters, hot baths in the wilderness. Those that are diligent in their business sometimes find more advantages than they expected.

31. And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. 32. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom : and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 33. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned his stead. 34. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in



his stead. 35. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad (who smote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith. 36. And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. 37. And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. 38. And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. 39. And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wives name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 40. And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, 41. Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, 42. Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, 43. Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their possession; he is Esau the father of the Edomites.

By degrees it seems the Edomites wormed out the Horites, and got full possession of the country, and had a government of their own. 1. They were ruled by kings that governed the whole country, and seem to have come to the throne by election, and not by lineal descent; so Bishop Patrick observes. These kings reigned in Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel, i. e. before Moses's time, for he was king in Jehshurun, ver. 31. God had lately promised Jacob that kings should come out of his loins, chap. xxxv. 11. yet Esau's blood becomes royal long before any of Jacob's did. Note, In external prosperity and honour the children of the covenant are often cast behind, and those that are out of covenant get the start. The triumphing of the wicked may be quick, but it is short, soon ripe, and as soon rotten, but the products of the promise, though they are slow they are sure and lasting, *at the end it shall speak and not lie*. We may suppose it a great trial to the faith of God's Israel, to hear of the pomp and power of the kings of Edom, while they were bond-slaves in Egypt, but those that look for great things from God must be content to wait for them; God's time is the best time. 2. They were afterwards governed by dukes, again here named, who, I suppose, ruled all at the same time in several places in the country. They set up this form of government, either in conformity to the Horites, who had used it, ver. 29. or God's providence reduced them to it as some conjecture, to correct them for their unkindness to Israel, in refusing them passage through their country, *Numb. xx. 18*. Note, When power is abused it is just with God to weaken it, by turning it into divers channels. *For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof*. Sin brought Edom from kings to dukes, from crowns to coronets. We read of the dukes of Edom, *Exod. xv. 15*. yet long after of their kings again.

Lastly, Observe, mount Seir is called *land of their possession*, ver. 43. While the Israelites dwelt in the house of bondage, and their Canaan was only the land of promise, the Edomites dwelt in their own habitations, and Seir was in their possession. Note, The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope, (*Luke xvi. 25*.) while the children of God have their all hope, and next to nothing in hand. But all things considered, it is better to have Canaan in promise, than mount Seir in possession.



C H A P. XXXVII.

*At this chapter begins the story of Joseph, who from hence in every chapter (but one) to the end of this book makes the greatest figure. He was Jacob's eldest son by his beloved wife Rachel, born, as many eminent men were, of a mother that had been long barren. His story is so remarkably divided between his humiliation and his exaltation, that we cannot avoid seeing something of Christ in it, who was first humbled and then exalted, and in many instances, so as to answer the type of Joseph: It also shews the lot of Christians, who must through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom. In this chapter we have,*

1. *The malice his brethren bore against him: They hated him, (1.) Because he informed his father of their wickedness, ver. 1, 2. (2.) Because his father loved him, ver. 3, 4. (3.) Because he dreamed of his dominion over them, ver. 5—11.*
2. *The mischiefs his brethren designed, and did to him. (1.) His kind visit he made them gave an opportunity, ver. 12—17. (2.) They designed to slay him, but determined to starve him, ver. 18—24. (3.) They changed their purpose and sold him for a slave, ver. 25—28. (4.) They made their father believe that he was torn in pieces, ver. 29—35. (5.) He was sold in Egypt to Potiphar, ver. 36. And all this was working together for good.*

1. **A**ND Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2. These are the generations of Jacob; Joseph being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his fathers wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. 3. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. 4. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

Moses has no more to say of the Edomites, unless as they happen to fall in Israel's way, but now applies himself closely to the story of Jacob's family, *These are the generations of Jacob*. His is not a bare barren genealogy as those of Esau, chap. xxxvi. 1. but a memorable useful history. Here is, 1. Jacob a sojourner with his father Isaac, who was yet living, ver. 1. We shall never be at home till we come to Heaven. 2. Joseph a shepherd feeding the flock with his brethren, ver. 2. Though he was his father's darling, yet he was not bred up in idleness or delicacy. Those do not truly love their children that do not enure them to business, and labour, and mortification. Fondling of children is with good reason commonly called the spoiling them, and marring them. Those that are trained up to do nothing are likely to be good for nothing. 3. Joseph beloved by his father, ver. 3, partly for his dear mother's sake that was dead, and partly for his own sake: because he was the greatest comfort of his old age, probably he waited on him, and was more observant of him than the rest of his sons; he was the son of the ancient, so some, i. e. when he was a child he was as grave and discreet as if he had been an old man: a child but not childish. Jacob proclaimed his affection to him by dressing him finer than the rest of his children, he made him a coat of divers colours, which probably was significant to further honours intended him. Note, Though those children are happy that have that in them which justly recommends them to their parents particular love, yet it is the prudence of parents not to make a difference between one child and another, unless there be a great and manifest cause given for it by the childrens dutifulness or undutifulness; paternal government must be impartial and managed with a steady hand. 4. Joseph hated by his brethren (1.) Because his father loved him; when parents make a difference children soon take notice of it, and it often occasions feuds and quarrels in families. (2.) Because he brought to his father their evil report. Jacob's sons did that when they were from under his eye, which they durst not have done if they had been at home with him, but Joseph gave his father an account of their ill-carriage, that he might reprove and restrain them; not as a malicious tale-bearer to sow discord, but as a faithful brother, who, when he durst not admonish them himself, represented their faults to one that had authority to admonish them. Note, (1.) It is common for friendly monitors to be looked upon as enemies. They that hate to be reformed hate those that would reform them, *Prov. ix. 8*. (2.) It is common for those that are beloved of God to be hated by the world, whom Heaven blesteth hell curseth: those whom God speaks comfortably to, wicked men will not speak peaceably to. It is said here of Joseph, *the lad was with the sons of Bilhah*; some read it, and he was servant to them; they made him their drudge.

5. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6. And he said



said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed. 7. For behold we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo my sheaves arose, and also stood upright; and behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8. And his brethren said unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words. 9. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and, behold, the sun and the moon, and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10. And he told it to his father and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream, that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother, and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth? 11. And his brethren envied him: but his father observed the saying.

Here, 1. Joseph relates the prophetic dreams he had, *ver. 6, 7, 9, 10.* Though he was now very young, about seventeen years old, yet he was pious and devout, and well inclined, and this fitted him for God's gracious discoveries of himself to him. Joseph had a great deal of trouble before him, and therefore God gave him sometimes this prospect of his advancement, to support and comfort him under the long and grievous troubles with which he was to be exercised: Thus Christ had a *joy set before him*, and so have Christians. Note, God has ways of preparing his people beforehand for the trials which they cannot foresee, but which he has an eye to in the comforts he furnisheth them with. His dreams were, (1.) That his brethrens sheaves all bowed to his, intimating upon what occasion they should be brought to do obeisance to him, *viz.* in seeking to him for corn: their empty sheaves should bow to his full one. (2.) That the sun and moon, and the eleven stars did obeisance to him, *ver. 9.* Joseph was more of a prophet, than a politician, else he would have kept this to himself, when he could not but know that his brethren did already hate him, and that this would but the more exasperate them. But if he told it in his simplicity, yet God directed it for the mortification of his brethren. Observe, Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but he did not dream of his imprisonment. Thus many young people, when they are setting out in the world, think of nothing but prosperity and pleasure, and never dream of trouble.

2. His brethren take it very heinously, and are more and more enraged against him, *ver. 8.* *Shalt thou indeed reign over us?* See here, 1. How truly they interpreted his dream, that he should reign over them. They become the expositors of his dream, who were enemies to the accomplishment of it, as in Gideon's story, *Judg. vii. 13, 14.* *they perceived that he spake of them*, *Matth. xxi. 45.* The event exactly answered this interpretation, *chap. xlii. 6, &c.* 2. How scornfully they repented it, *shalt thou*, that art but one, reign over us, that are many? Thou that art the youngest, over us that are elder? Note, The reign and dominion of Jesus Christ, our Joseph, hath been and is despised and striven against by a carnal unbelieving world, who cannot endure to think that *this man should reign over them*: The dominion also of the *upright in the morning* of the resurrection, is thought of with the utmost disdain.

3. His father gives him a gentle rebuke for it, yet observes the saying, *ver. 10, 11.* Probably he checked him for it, to lessen the offence which his brethren would be apt to take at it, yet he took notice of it more than he seemed to do: he insinuated that it was but an idle dream, because his mother was brought in who had been dead some time since, whereas the sun, moon, and eleven stars, signify no more, but the whole family that should have a dependance upon him, and be glad to be beholden to him. Note, The faith of God's people in God's promises is often sorely shaken by their misunderstanding of the promises, and then suggesting the improbabilities that attend the performance: But God is doing his own work, and will do it, whether we understand him aright or no. Jacob, like Mary, (*Luke ii. 51.*) *kept these sayings in his heart*, and no doubt remembered them long after, when the event answered the prediction.

12. And his brethren went to feed their fathers flock in Shechem. 13. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said unto him, Here am I. 14. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. 15. And a certain man found him, and behold he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? 16. And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. 17. And the man said, they are departed hence: for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Do-

than. 18. And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him, to slay him. 19. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20. Come now therefore and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. 21. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. 22. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

Here is 1. The kind visit which Joseph, in obedience to his father's command, made to his brethren, who were feeding the flocks at Shechem, many miles off. Some suggest that they went thither on purpose, expecting that Joseph would be sent to see them, and then they should have an opportunity to do him a mischief. However, Joseph and his father had both of them more of the innocency of the dove than the wisdom of the serpent, else he had never come thus into the hands of those that hated him: but God designed it all for good. See in Joseph an instance, (1.) Of dutifulness to his father; though he was his father's darling, yet he was made, and was willing, to be his father's servant. How readily doth he wait his father's orders? *Here am I*, *ver. 13.* Note, Those children that are best beloved by their parents, should be most obedient to their parents, and then their love is well bestowed, and well returned. (2.) Of kindness to his brethren; though he knew they *hated him*, and *envied him*, yet he made no objections against his father's commands, either from the distance of the place, or danger of the journey, but cheerfully embraced the opportunity of shewing his respect to his brethren. Note, It is a very good lesson, though it is hardly learnt, and rarely practised, *to love those that hate us*; if our relations do not their duty to us, yet we must not be wanting in our duty to them. This is thank-worthy: Joseph was sent by his father to Shechem, to see whether his brethren were well there, and whether the country had not risen upon them, and destroyed them, in revenge of their barbarous murder of the Shechemites, some years before. But Joseph not finding them there, went to Dothan, which shewed that he undertook this journey, not only in obedience to his father, for then he might have returned, when he missed of them at Shechem, having done what his father bid him; but, out of love to his brethren, he seeks diligently till he finds them. Thus let brotherly love continue, and let us give proofs of it.

2. The bloody and malicious plot of his brethren against him, who rendered good for evil, and *for his love they were his adversaries*. Observe, 1. How deliberate they were in the contrivance of this mischief, when they *saw him afar off they conspired against him*, *ver. 18.* It was not in a heat, or upon a sudden provocation, that they thought to slay him, but from malice propense, and in cold blood. Note, He that hateth his brother is a murderer, for he will be one if he have an opportunity, *1 Joh. iii. 15.* Malice is a most mischievous thing, and is in danger of making bloody work where it is harboured and indulged. The more there is of a project and contrivance in a sin, the worse it is; it is bad to do evil, but worse to devise it. 2. How cruel they were in their design, nothing less than his blood would satisfy them, *Come, and let us slay him*, *ver. 20.* Note, The old enmity hunts for the precious life. They are the *blood-thirsty that hate the upright*, *Prov. xxix. 10.* and it is the blood of the saints that the whore is drunk with. 3. How scornfully they reproached him for his dreams, *ver. 19.* *This dreamer comes*, and, *ver. 20,* *we shall see what will become of his dreams.* This shews what it was that stuck upon their stomach, they that could not endure to think of doing obeisance to him, that was it which they were plotting to prevent by the murder of him. Note, Men that fret and rage at God's counsels, are foolishly aiming to defeat them, but they *imagine a vain thing*, *Psal. ii. 1, 2, 3.* God's counsels will stand. 4. How they agreed to keep one another's counsel, and to cover the murder with a lie, *we will say some evil beast hath devoured him*, whereas they were worse than the most evil beasts that were now consulting to devour him, for evil beasts prey not on those of their own kind, but these were tearing a piece of themselves.

3. Reuben's project to deliver him, *ver. 21, 22.* Note, God can raise up friends for his people, even among their enemies, for he has all hearts in his hands: Reuben, of all the brothers, had most reason to be jealous of Joseph, for he was the first-born, and so intitled to those distinguishing favours which Jacob was conferring on Joseph, yet he proves his best friend. Reuben's temper seems to have been soft and effeminate, which had betrayed him to the sin of uncleanness, while the temper of the two next brothers Simeon and Levi was fierce, which betrayed them to the sin of murder, a sin which Reuben startled at the thought of. Note, Our natural constitution should be guarded against those sins it is most inclinable to, and improved, (as Reuben's here) against those sins it is most averse to. Reuben made a proposal which they thought



thought would effectually answer their intention of destroying Joseph, and yet which he designed should answer his intention of rescuing Joseph out of their hands, and restoring him to his father, probably hoping thereby to recover his father's favour, which he had lately lost, but God over-ruled all to serve his own purpose of making Joseph an instrument to *save much people alive*.

Joseph was here a type of Christ: though he was the beloved son of his father, and hated by a wicked world, yet the father sent him out of his bosom to *visit us in great humility*, and love; he came from Heaven to earth to seek and save us; yet then malicious plots were laid against him, *he came to his own*, and his own not only *received him not*, but conspired, *This is the Heir, come let us kill him*, crucify him, crucify him: This he submitted to, in pursuance of his design to redeem and save us.

23. And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him. 24. And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. 25. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lift up their eyes and looked, and behold a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. 26. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? 27. Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, and our flesh: and his brethren were content. 28. Then there passed by Midianites merchant-men; and they drew and lift up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt. 29. And Reuben returned unto the pit; and behold, Joseph was not in the pit: and he rent his cloaths. 30. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

We have here the execution of their plot against Joseph.

1. They stript him, each striving to seize the envied coat of many colours, *ver. 23*. Thus in imagination they degraded him from the birth-right which perhaps this was the badge of, grieving him, affronting their father, and making themselves sport while they insulted over him, Now, Joseph, where is the fine coat? Thus our Lord Jesus was stript of his seamless coat, and thus his suffering saints have first been industriously divested of their privileges and honours, and then made *the off-scouring of all things*.

2. They went about to starve him, throwing him into a dry pit, to perish there with hunger and cold, so cruel were their tender mercies, *ver. 24*. Note, Where envy reigns, pity is banished, and humanity itself is forgotten, *Prov. xxvii. 4. so full of deadly poison* is malice, that the more barbarous any thing is, the more grateful it is. Now Joseph begged for his life, in *the anguish of his soul*, Gen. xlii. 21. intreated by all imaginable endearments, and that they would be content with his coat, and spare his life: he pleads innocency, relation, affection, submission, weeps, and makes supplication, but all vain: Reuben only relents and intercedes for him, *chap. xlii. 22*. But he cannot prevail, to save Joseph from *the horrible pit*, in which they resolve he shall die by degrees, and be buried alive. Is this he to whom his brethren must do obeisance? Note, God's providences often seem to contradict his purposes even then when they are serving them, and working at a distance towards the accomplishment of them.

3. They slighted him, when he was in distress, and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph, for when he was pining away in the pit, bemoaning his own misery, and with a languishing cry calling to them for pity, they *sat down to eat bread*, *ver. 25*. (1.) They felt no remorse of conscience for the sin, which if they had, it would have spoiled their stomach to their meat, and the relish of it. Note, A great force put upon conscience commonly stupifies it, and for the time deprives it both of sense and speech. Daring sinners are secure ones: but the consciences of Joseph brethren, tho' asleep, now were roused long after, *chap. xlii. 21*. (2.) They were now pleased to think how they were freed from the fear of their brother's dominion over them, and that on the contrary they had turned the wheel upon him. They made merry over him, as the persecutors over the two witnesses that had tormented them, *Rev. xi. 10*. Note, Those that oppose God's counsels, may possibly prevail so far as to think they have gained their point, and yet be deceived.

4. They sold him: a caravan of merchants very opportunely passed by, providence so ordering it, and Judah made the motion, that they should sell Joseph to them, to be carried far enough off into Egypt, where, in all probability, he would be lost, and never heard of more, (1.) Judah moved it in compassion to Joseph, *ver. 26. What profit is it if we slay our brother*, it will be less guilt, and more gain to sell him. Note, When we are tempted

to sin, we should consider the unprofitableness of it. It is what there is nothing to be got by. (2.) They acquiesced in it, because they thought if he were sold for a slave he would never be a lord, if sold into Egypt would never be their lord, yet all this was working towards it. Note, The wrath of man shall praise God, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain, *Psal. lxxvi. 10*. Joseph's brethren were wonderfully restrained from murdering him; and their selling him as wonderfully turned to God's praise; as Joseph was sold by the contrivance of Judah, for twenty pieces of silver, so was our Lord Jesus for thirty, and by one of the same name too, Judas.

Reuben (it seems) was gone away from his brethren when they sold Joseph, intending to come round some other way to the pit, and to help Joseph out of it, and return him safe to his father; this was a kind project, but if it had taken effect, what had become of God's purpose concerning his preferment in Egypt. Note, There are many devices in man's heart, many devices of the enemies of God's people to destroy them, and of their friends to help them, which perhaps are both disappointed, as these here, but the *counsel of the Lord that shall stand*. Reuben thought himself undone because the child was sold, *I, whither shall I go?* *ver. 30*. he being the eldest, his father would expect from him an account of him, but it proved they had all been undone if he had not been sold.

31. And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood. 32. And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no. 33. And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. 34. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. 35. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning: thus his father wept for him. 36. And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

Joseph would soon be missed, great enquiry would be made for him, and therefore his brethren have a further design, to make the world believe that Joseph was torn in pieces by a wild beast: and this they did,

1. To clear themselves, that they might not be suspected to have done him any mischief. Note, We have all learned of Adam to *cover our transgression*, Job xxxi. 33. when the devil has taught men to commit one sin, he then teaches them to conceal it with another; theft and murder, with lying and perjury; but he that covers his sin shall not prosper long. Joseph's brethren kept their own and one another's counsel for some time, but their villany came to light at last, and it is here published to the world, and the remembrance of it transmitted to every age.

2. To grieve their good father: it seems designed by them on purpose to be revenged upon him for his distinguishing love of Joseph; it was contrived on purpose to create the utmost vexation to him: they sent him Joseph's coat of many colours, with one colour more than it had had, a bloody colour, *ver. 32*. They pretend they had found it in the fields, and Jacob himself must be scornfully asked, *Is this thy son's coat?* Now the badge of his honour is the discovery of his fate; and it is rashly inferred from the bloody coat, that *Joseph without doubt is rent in pieces*. Love is always apt to fear the worst concerning the person loved; there is a love that casteth out fear, but that is a perfect love. Now let those that know the heart of a parent suppose the agonies of poor Jacob, and put their souls into his soul's stead: how strongly doth he represent to himself the direful idea of Joseph's misery! Sleeping or waking, he imagines he sees the wild beast setting upon Joseph, thinks he hears his piteous shrieks, when the lion roared against him, makes himself tremble and grow chill many a time when he fancies how the beast sucked his blood, tore him limb from limb, and left no remains of him but the coat of many colours to carry the tidings. And no doubt it is added no little to the grief that he had exposed him by sending him, and sending him all alone on this dangerous journey, that proved so fatal to him. This cuts him to the heart, and he is ready to look upon himself as an accessory to the death of his son.

Now, 1. Endeavours were used to comfort him; his sons basely pretended to do it, *ver. 35*. but miserable hypocritical comforters were they all. Had they really desired to comfort him they might easily have done it by telling him the truth, Joseph is alive, he is indeed sold into Egypt, but it will be an easy thing to send thither and ransom him; this would have *loosed his sackcloth*, and *girded him with gladness* presently. I wonder their countenances did not betray their guilt, and with what face they could pretend to condole the death of Joseph when they knew he was alive.

Note,



Note, The heart is strangely hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

But, 2. It was all in vain, *Jacob refused to be comforted*, ver. 35. He was an obstinate mourner, resolved to go down to the grave mourning: it was not a sudden transport of passion, like that of David, Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son! But, like Job, he hardened himself in sorrow. Note, 1. Great affection to any creature doth but prepare for so much the greater affliction when it is either removed from us, or embittered to us, inordinate love commonly ends in immoderate grief; as much as the sway of the pendulum throws one way, so much it will throw the other way. 2. Those consult neither the comfort of their souls, nor the credit of their religion, that are resolved in their sorrow, upon any occasion whatsoever; we must never say we will go to our grave mourning, because we know not what joyful days providence may yet reserve for us, and it is our wisdom and duty to accommodate ourselves to providence. 3. We oft perplex ourselves with imaginary troubles; we fancy things worse than they are, and then afflict ourselves more than we need; sometimes there needs no more to comfort us, but to undeceive us: it is good to hope the best.

Lastly, The Ishmaelites and Midianites having bought Joseph only to make their markets of him, here we have him sold again, with gain enough to the merchants, no doubt, to Potiphar, ver. 36. Jacob was lamenting the loss of his life; had he known all he would have lamented, tho' not so passionately, the loss of his liberty: shall Jacob's free-born son exchange the best robe of his family for the livery of an Egyptian lord, and all the marks of servitude? How soon was the land of Egypt made a house of bondage to the seed of Jacob! Note, It is the wisdom of parents not to bring up their children too delicately, because they know not what hardships and mortifications providence may reduce them to before they die. Jacob little thought that ever his beloved Joseph should be thus bought and sold for a servant.

## C H A P. XXXVIII.

*This chapter gives us an account of Judah and his family, and such an account it is, that one would wonder that of all Jacob's sons our Lord should spring out of Judah, Heb. vii. 14. If we were to form a character of him by this story here, we would not say, Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise, Gen. xlix. 8. But God will shew that his choice is of grace and not of merit, and that Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief, and is not ashamed upon their repentance to be allied to them. Also, that the worth and worthiness of Jesus Christ is personal, of himself, and not derived from his ancestors, humbling himself to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, he was pleased to descend from some that were infamous. How little reason had the Jews, who were so called from this Judah, to boast as they did, that they were not born of fornication, John viii. 41. We have in this chapter, 1. Judah's marriage and issue, and the untimely death of his two eldest sons, ver. 1—11. 2. Judah's incest with his daughter-in-law Tamar, incognito, ver. 12—23. 3. His confusion when it was discovered, ver. 24—26. 4. The birth of his twin sons in whom his family was built up; ver. 27; ad fin.*

1. **A**ND it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned into a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. 2. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. 3. And she conceived; and bare a son; and he called his name Er. 4. And she conceived again and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. 5. And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him. 6. And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, whose name was Tamar. 7. And Er, Judah's first-born was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the Lord slew him. 8. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brothers wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. 9. And Onan knew that the seed should be his: and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brothers wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. 10. And the thing which he did, displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also. 11. Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy fathers house, till Shelah my son be grown; (for he said, Lest peradventure he die also as his brethren did:) and and Tamar went and dwelt in her fathers house.

Here is; 1. Judah's foolish friendship with a Canaanite man; he went down from his brethren, and withdrew for a time from their society, and his father's family, and got to be intimately acquainted.

ed. with one Hirah an Adullamite, ver. 1. It is computed, that he was now not much above fifteen or sixteen years of age, an easy prey to the tempter. Note, When young people that have been well educated begin to change their company, they will soon change their manners, and lose their good education. They that go down from their brethren, that despise and forsake the society of the seed of Israel, and pick up Canaanites for their companions, are going down the hill apace. It is of great consequence to young people whom they chuse for their associates, for those they will imitate, study to recommend themselves to, and by their opinion of them value themselves: an error in this choice is oft fatal.

2. His foolish marriage with a Canaanite woman; a match made not by his father, who it should seem was not consulted; but by his new friend, Hirah, ver. 2. Many have been drawn in to marriages scandalous and pernicious to themselves and their families by keeping bad company, and growing familiar with ill people: one wicked league entangles men in another. Let young people be admonished by this to take their good parents for their best friends, and be advised by them, and not by flatterers that wheedle them to make a prey of them.

3. His children by this Canaanite, and his disposal of them: Three sons he had by her, Er, Onan, and Shelah. It is probable she embraced the worship of the God of Israel, at least in profession, but, for ought appears, there was little of the fear of God in the family: Judah married too young, and very rashly; he also married his sons too young when they had neither wit nor grace to govern themselves, and the consequences were very ill.

1. His first-born Er was notoriously wicked; he was so in the sight of the Lord, i. e. in defiance of God and his law; or, if perhaps he was not wicked in the sight of the world, he was so in God's sight, to whom all mens wickedness is open; and what came of it? Why God cut him off presently, ver. 7. *The Lord slew him*. Note, Sometimes God makes quick work with finners, and takes them away in his wrath, when they are but just setting out in a wicked course of life.

2. The next brother Onan was; according to the ancient usage, married to the widow to preserve the name of his deceased brother that died childless. Tho' God had taken away his life for his wickedness, yet they were solicitous to preserve his memory; and their disappointment therein, tho' Onan's sin was a further punishment of his wickedness. This custom of marrying the brother's widow was afterward made one of the laws of Moses, Deut. xxv. 5. Onan, tho' he consented to marry the widow, yet to the great abuse of his own body, of the wife he had married, and the memory of his brother that was gone, he refused to raise up seed unto his brother, as he was in duty bound. This was so much the worse, because the Messiah was to descend from Judah, and had he not been guilty of this wickedness, he might have had the honour of being one of his ancestors. Note, Those sins that dishonour the body, and defile it are very displeasing to God, and the evidences of vile affections.

3. Shelah the third son was reserved for the widow, (ver. 11.) yet with design that he should not marry so young as his brothers had done, lest he die also; some think that Judah never intended to marry Shelah to Tamar, but unjustly suspected her to have been the death of her two former husbands, (whereas it was their own wickedness that slew them) and then sent her to her father's house with a charge to remain a widow. If so, it was an inexcusable piece of prevarication he was guilty of; however, Tamar acquiesced for the present, and waited the issue.

12. And in process of time, the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died: and Judah was comforted; and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13. And it was told Tamar; saying, Behold, thy father in law goeth up to Timnath, to shear his sheep. 14. And she put her widows garment off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place; which is by the way to Timnath: for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. 15. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. 16. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law) and she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? 17. And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock: and she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? 18. And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand; and he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. 19. And she arose and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. 20. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from



from the womans hand : but he found her not. 21. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way-side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place. 22. And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place. 23. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

It is a very ill-favoured story that is here told concerning Judah; one would not have expected such folly in Israel: Judah had buried his wife, and widowers have need to stand upon their guard with the utmost caution and resolution, against all fleshly lusts. He was unjust to his daughter-in-law, either thro' negligence or design, in not giving her his surviving son, and this exposed her to temptation.

1. Tamar wickedly prostituted herself as a harlot to Judah, that if the son might not the father might raise up seed to the deceased. Some excuse this by suggesting, that though she was a Canaanite yet she had embraced the true religion, and believed the promise made to Abraham and his seed, particularly that of the Messiah, who was to descend from the loins of Jacob, and that she was therefore thus earnestly desirous to have a child by one of that family, that she might have the honour, or at least stand fair for the honour, of being the mother of the Messiah. And if this was indeed her desire it had it's success, she is one of the four women particularly named in the genealogy of Christ, *Matth. i. 3.* Her sinful practice was pardoned, and her good intention was accepted, which magnifies the grace of God, but will by no means be admitted to justify or encourage the like. Bishop Patrick thinks it probable that she hoped Shelah, who was by right her husband, might have come along with his father, and that he might have been allured to her embraces.

There was a great deal of plot and contrivance in Tamar's sin. (1.) She took an opportunity for it when Judah had a time of mirth and feasting with his sheep-shearers. Note, Times of jollity often prove times of temptation, particularly to the sin of uncleanness; when men are fed to the full, the reins are apt to be let loose. (2.) She exposed herself as a harlot in an open place, ver. 14. Those that are and would be chaste, must be keepers at home, *Tit. ii. 5.* It should seem it was the custom of harlots, in those times to cover their faces, that though they were not ashamed, yet they might seem to be so: The sin of uncleanness did not then go so bare-faced as now it doth.

2. Judah was taken in the snare, and though it was ignorantly that he was guilty of incest with his daughter-in-law, not knowing her to be so, yet he was wilfully guilty of fornication, whoever she was, he knew she was not his wife, and therefore not to be touched: nor was his sin capable in the least of such a charitable excuse as some make for Tamar, that though the action was ill the intention possibly might be good. Observe, 1. Judah's sin began in the eye, ver. 15, he saw her. Note, Those have eyes and hearts too full of adultery (as it is *2 Pet. ii. 14.*) that catch at every bait that presents itself to them, and are as tinder to every spark: we have need to make a covenant with our eyes, and to turn them from beholding of vanity, lest the eye infect the heart. 2. It added to the scandal, that the hire of a harlot (than which nothing more infamous) was demanded, offered, and accepted: A kid from the flock, a goodly price at which her chastity and honour was valued! Nay, had the consideration been thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil, it had not been a valuable consideration. The favour of God, the purity of the soul, the peace of the conscience, and the hope of Heaven are too precious to be exposed to sale at any such rates; the Topar of Ethiopia cannot equal them; what are those profited that lose their souls to gain the world, 3. It turned to the reproach of Judah that he left his jewels in pawn for a kid. Note, fleshly lusts are not only brutish, but sottish, and ruining to mens secular interests. It is plain that whoredom, as well as wine and new wine, take away the heart first, else it would never take away the signet and the bracelets.

3. He lost his jewels by the bargain: he sent the kid according to his promise, to redeem his pawn, but the supposed harlot could not be found. He sent it by his friend (who was indeed his back friend, because he was aiding and abetting in his evil deeds) the Adullamite; who came back without the pledge. It is a good account, if it be but true, of any place that which they here gave, that *there is no harlot in this place*, for such sinners are the scandals and plagues of any place. Judah sits down content to lose his signet and his bracelets, and forbids his friend to make any further inquiry after them, giving this reason, *lest we be shamed*, ver. 27. Either, 1. Lest his sin should come to be known publicly, and be talked of: Fornication and all uncleanness have ever been looked upon as scandalous things, and the reproach and shame of those that are convicted of them. Nothing will make those blush, that are not ashamed of these. 2. Lest he should be laughed at as a fool for trusting a whore

with his signet and his bracelets. He expresses no concern about the sin to get that pardoned, only about the shame to prevent that. Note, There are many who are more solicitous to preserve their reputation with men, than to secure the favour of God, and a good conscience; *lest we be shamed* goes further with them, than *lest we be damned*.

24. And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also behold, she is with child by whoredom: and Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. 25. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, by the man whose these are, am I with child: and she said Discern, I pray thee, Whose are these, the signet and bracelets, and staff. 26. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son: and he knew her again no more. 27. And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold twins were in her womb. 28. And it came to pass when she travailed, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. 29. And it came to pass as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out; and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. 30. And afterward came out his brother that had the scarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah.

Here is, 1. Judah's rigour against Tamar, when he heard she was an adulteress: she was in the eye of the law Shelah's wife, and therefore her being with child by another was looked upon as an injury and reproach to Judah's family; *bring her forth therefore*, saith Judah, the master of the family, and *let her be burnt*, not burnt to death, but burnt in the cheek or forehead, stigmatized for a whore. This seems probable, ver. 24. Note, It is a common thing for men to be severe against those very sins in others, which yet they allow themselves in: And so in judging others they condemn themselves, *Rom. ii. 1.* See *Rom. xiv. 22.* If he designed she should be burnt to death, perhaps under pretence of zeal against the sin, he was contriving how to get rid of his daughter-in-law, being loth to marry Shelah to her. Note, it is a common thing, but a very ill thing, to cover malice against mens persons with a shew of zeal against their vices.

2. Judah's shame when it was made to appear that he was the adulterer: she produced *the ring and the bracelets* in court, which justified the fathering of the child upon Judah, ver. 25, 26. Note, The wickedness that has been most secretly committed, and most industriously concealed, yet sometimes is strangely brought to light, to the shame and confusion of those who have said, *No eye sees*. A bird of the air may carry the voice, however, there is a discovering day coming, when all will be laid open. Some of the Jewish writers observe, that as Judah had said to his father, *See, is this thy sons coat?* chap. xxxvii. 32. so it was now said to him, *See, are these thy signet and bracelets?* Judah being convicted by his own conscience, (1.) confesses his sin, *She has been more righteous than I*. He owns that a perpetual mark of infamy should be fastened rather upon him, who had been so much accessory to it. Note, Those offenders ought to be treated with the greatest tenderness, to whom we have any way given occasion of offending. If servants purloin, and their masters, by with-holding from them what is due, tempt them to it, they ought to forgive them. (2.) He never returned to it again, *knew her again no more*. Note, Those do not truly repent of their sins that do not forsake them.

3. The building up of Judah's family, hereby notwithstanding, in the birth of Pharez and Zarah, from whom descended the most considerable families of the illustrious tribe of Judah: It should seem the birth was hard to the mother, by which she was corrected for her sin. The children also, like Jacob and Esau, struggled for the birth-right, and Pharez got it, is ever named first, and from him Christ descended. He had his name from his breaking forth before his brother; this breach be upon thee, which is applicable to those that sow discord, and create distance between brethren. The Jews, as Zarah, bid fair for the birth-right, and were marked with a scarlet thread, as those that come out first, but the Gentile, like Pharez, as a son of violence, got the start of them, by that violence, which the kingdom of Heaven suffers, and attained to the righteousness which the Jews came short of: Yet, when the fulness of time is come, all Israel shall be saved. Both these sons are named in the genealogy of our Saviour, *Matth. i. 3.* to perpetuate the story, as an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. Some observe, that the four eldest sons of Jacob fell under very foul guilt, Reuben and Judah of incest, Simeon and Levi of murder, yet they were patriarchs, of Levi came the priests, of Judah kings and the Messiah, thus they



they became examples of repentance, and monuments of pardoning mercy.

## C H A P. XXXIX.

*At this chapter we return to the story of Joseph: We have him here, 1. A servant, a slave in Potiphar's house, ver. 1. and yet there greatly honoured and favoured (1.) By the providence of God, which made him in effect a master, ver. 2—6. (2.) By the grace of God, which made him more than a conqueror over a strong temptation to uncleanness, ver. 7—12. 2. We have him here a sufferer, falsely accused, ver. 13—18. Imprisoned, ver. 19—20. And yet his imprisonment made both honourable and comfortable, by the tokens of God's special presence with him, ver. 21—23. And herein Joseph was a type of Christ, who took upon him the form of a servant, and yet then did that which made it evident that God was with him; who was tempted by Satan but overcome the temptation: Who was falsely accused and bound, and yet had all things committed to his hand.*

1. **A**ND Joseph was brought down to Egypt: and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmaelites, which had brought him down thither. 2. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man: and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had, he put into his hand. 5. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptians house for Josephs sake: and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in the house, and in the field. 6. And he left all that he had in Josephs hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat: and Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.

Here is, 1. Joseph bought, ver. 1. and he that bought him, whatever he gave for him, had a good bargain of him, it was better than the merchandise of silver. The Jews have a proverb, If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls. He was sold to an officer of Pharaoh, with whom he might get acquainted with publick persons, and publick business, and so be fitted for the preferment he was afterwards designed for. Note, 1. What God intends men for he will be sure some way or other to qualify them for. 2. Providence is to be acknowledged in the disposal even of poor servants, and in their settlements, and therein may perhaps be working towards something great and considerable.

2. Joseph blessed, wonderfully blessed even in the house of his servitude, 1. God prospered him, ver. 2, 3. Perhaps the affairs of Potiphar's family had remarkably gone backward before, but upon Joseph's coming into it a discernable turn was given to them, and the face and posture of them altered on a sudden. Though at first we may suppose his hand was put to the meanest services, even in those appeared his ingenuity and industry, and a particular blessing of Heaven attending him: and as he rose in his employment it became more and more discernable. Note, 1. Those that have wisdom and grace have that which cannot be taken away from them, whatever else they are robbed of: Joseph's brethren had stripped him of his coat of many colours, but they could not strip him of his virtue and prudence. 2. Those that can separate us from all our friends, yet cannot deprive us of the gracious presence of our God. When Joseph had none of all his relations with him, he had his God with him, even in the house of the Egyptian, Joseph was separated from his brethren, but not from his God; banished from his father's house, but the Lord was with him, and that comforted him. 3. It is God's presence with us that makes all we do prosperous. Those that would prosper must therefore make God their friend; and those that do prosper must therefore give God the praise. 2. His master preferred him; by degrees made him steward of his household, ver. 4. Note, (1.) Industry and honesty are the surest and safest way both of rising and thriving, *seekest thou a man prudent, and faithful, and diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings at length, and not always before mean men.* (2.) It is the wisdom of those that are in any sort of authority to countenance and employ those with whom it appears that the presence of God is, *Psal. ci. 6.* Potiphar knew what he did when he put all into the hand of Joseph, for he knew it would prosper better there than in his own hand. (3.) He that is faithful in a few things stands fair for being made ruler over many things, *Matth. xxv.*

21. Christ goes by this rule with his servants. (4.) It is a great ease to a master to have those employed under him that are trusty; Potiphar was so well satisfied with Joseph's conduct, that he *knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat*, ver. 6. The servant had all the care and trouble of the estate, the master had only the enjoyment of it; an example not to be imitated by any master unless he could be sure that he had one in all respects like Joseph for a servant. 3. God favoured his master for his sake, ver. 5, *He blessed the Egyptians house*, though he were an Egyptian, a stranger to the true God, *for Josephs sake*, and he himself, like Laban, soon learned it by experience, *Gen. xxx. 27.* Note, 1. Good men are the blessings of the places where they live; even good servants may be so, though mean and lightly esteemed. 2. The prosperity of the wicked is one way or other for the sake of the godly: Here was a wicked family blessed for the sake of one good servant in it.

7. And it came to pass after these things, that his masters wife cast her eyes upon Joseph: and she said, Lie with me. 8. But he refused, and said unto his masters wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. 9. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? 10. And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her; to lie by her, or to be with her. 11. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. 12. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left the his garment in her hand, and fled and got him out.

Here is, 1. A most infamous instance of impudence and immodesty in Joseph's mistress, the shame and scandal of her sex, perfectly lost to all virtue and honour, and not to be mentioned or thought of without the utmost indignation. It was well she was an Egyptian, for we must have shared in the confusion if such folly had been found in Israel. Observe, 1. Her sin began in the eye: *She cast her eyes upon Joseph*, ver. 7, who was a goodly person and well-favoured, ver. 6. Note, (1.) Remarkable beauty either of men or women often proves a dangerous snare both to themselves and others; which forbids pride in it, and commands constant watchfulness against temptation that attends it, *favour is deceitful*, deceiving. (2.) We have great need to make a covenant with our eyes, *Job xxxi. 1.* lest the eye infect the heart: Joseph's mistress had a husband that ought to have been to her for a covering of the eyes from all other, *chap. xx. 16.* 2. She was daring and shameless in the sin, *with an impudent face*, and a whores forehead, she said, *Lie with me*, having already, by her wanton looks and unchaste desires, committed adultery with him in her heart. Note, Where the unclean spirit gets possession and dominion in a soul, it is as with the possessed of the devils, *Luke viii. 27, 29.* the clothes of modesty are thrown off, and the bands and fetters of shame are broke in pieces. When lust has got head, it will stick at nothing, blush at nothing, decency, and reputation, and conscience, and all, are sacrificed to that Baal-peor. 3. She was urgent and violent in the temptation; often she had been denied with the strongest reasons, and yet as often renewed her vile solicitations. *She spake to him day by day*, ver. 10. Now this was (1.) Great wickedness in her, and shewed her heart fully set to do evil. (2.) A great temptation to Joseph. The hand of Satan no doubt was in it, who, when he found he could not overcome him with troubles and the frowns of the world, but in them he still held fast his integrity, he assaulted him with soft and charming pleasures, which have ruined more than the former, and have slain their ten-thousands.

2. Here is a most famous instance of virtue and resolved chastity in Joseph, who by the grace of God was enabled to resist and overcome this temptation; and, all things considered, his escape was for ought I know as great an instance of the divine power, as the deliverance of the three children out of the fiery furnace.

1. The temptation he was assaulted with was very strong; never was a more violent onset made upon the fort of Chastity than this here. (1.) The sin he was tempted to was uncleanness, which, considering his youth, his beauty, his single state, and his plentiful living at the table of a ruler, was a sin which one would think might most easily beset him, and betray him. (2.) The tempter was his mistress, a person of quality, whom it was his place to obey, and his interest to oblige, whose favour would contribute more than any thing to his preferment, and by whose means he might arrive to the highest honours of the court. And, on the other hand, it was at his utmost peril if he slighted her, and made her his enemy. (3.) Opportunity makes a thief, makes an adulterer, and that favoured the temptation. The tempter was in the house with him, his business



business led him to be without any suspicion, where she was, and *ver. 11*, none of the family were within. There appeared no danger of it's being ever discovered, or if it should be suspected, his mistress would protect him. (4.) To all this, was added importunity; frequent, constant importunity, to such a degree, that at last she *laid violent hands* on him.

2. His resistance of the temptation was very brave, and the victory truly honourable. The almighty grace of God enabled him to overcome this assault of the enemy.

1. By strength of reason, and where-ever right reason may be heard, religion no doubt will carry the day. He argues from the respect he owed both to God, and his master, *ver. 8, 9*.

(1.) He would not wrong his master, nor do such an irreparable injury to his honour. He considers and urges it, how kind his master had been to them, what a confidence he had reposed in him, in how many instances he had befriended him, for which he abhorred the thought of making such an ungrateful return. Note, We are bound in honour, as well as justice and gratitude not in any thing to injure those that have a good opinion of us, and place a trust in us, how secretly soever it may be done. See how he argues, *ver. 9*. *There is none greater in this house than I*, therefore I will not do it. Note, Those that are great, instead of being proud of their greatness, should use it as an argument against sin. Is none greater than I? then I will scorn to do an ill thing: it is below me to serve a base lust; I will disparage myself so much.

(2.) He would not offend his God. This is his chief argument with which he strengthens his aversion to the sin. *How can I do this?* not only, *How shall I?* or, *How dare I?* but, *How can I?* *id possumus quod jure possumus*. It is good to shut out sin, with the strongest bar, even that of an impossibility. He that is born of God, cannot sin, *1 Joh. iii. 9*.

Three arguments Joseph urges upon himself. (1.) He considers who he was that was tempted. I, others may, perhaps, take their liberty, but I cannot. I that am an Israelite, in covenant with God, that profess religion, and relation to him, it is next to impossible for me to do so. (2.) What the sin was to which he was tempted; *this great wickedness*. Others might look upon it as a small matter, a peccadillo, a trick of youth, but Joseph had another idea of it. In general, when at any time we are tempted to sin, we must consider the *great wickedness* there is in it, let sin *appear sin*, *Rom. vii. 13*. call it by it's own name, and never go about to lessen it. Particular, let the sin of uncleanness always be looked upon as *great wickedness*, as an exceeding sinful sin, that wars against the soul as much as any other. (3.) Against whom he was tempted to sin, *against God*; not only how shall I do it and sin against my master, my mistress, my self, my own body and soul, but *against God*. Note, Gracious souls look upon this as the worst thing in sin that it is against God, against his nature and his dominion, against his love and his design. They that love God for this reason, hate sin.

2. By steadfastness of resolution. The grace of God enabled him to overcome the temptation, by avoiding the tempter. (1.) He *hearkened not to her* so much as to be with her, *ver. 10*. Note, Those that would be kept from harm, must keep themselves out of harm's way. *Avoid it, pass not by it*. Nay, (2.) When she laid hold on him he *left his garment in her hand*, *ver. 12*. He would not stay so much as to parley with the temptation, but flew out from it with the utmost abhorrence, he *left his garment* as one escaping for his life. Note, It is better lose a good coat, than lose a good conscience.

13. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth. 14. That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice. 15. And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. 16. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. 17. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me. 18. And it came to pass, as I lift up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out,

Joseph's mistress having tried in vain to make him a criminal, now endeavours to represent him as one; so to be revenged on him, for his virtue. Now was her love turned into the utmost rage and malice, and she pretends she cannot endure the sight of him, whom a while ago, she could not endure out of her sight. Chast and holy love will continue, tho' slighted, but sinful love, like Ammon's to Tamar, is easily changed into sinful hatred.

1. She accused him to his fellow-servants, (*ver. 13, 14, 15*) and put him into an ill name with them. Probably they envied him his interest in their master's favour, and his authority in the house,

and perhaps found themselves aggrieved, sometimes at his fidelity which prevented their purloining, and therefore were glad to hear any thing that might tend to his disgrace, and if there were room for it, incensed their mistress yet more against him. Observe, when she speaks of her husband, she doth not call him *husband*, or her *lord*, but only *he*; for she had forgotten the covenant of her God, that was between them. Thus the adulteress, *Prov. vii. 19*. calls her husband, *the good man*. Note, Innocency itself cannot secure a man's reputation. Every one that keeps a good conscience, cannot keep a good name.

2. She accused him to his master, who had power in his hand to punish him which his fellow-servants had not, *ver. 17, 18*. Observe, (1.) What an improbable story she tells, producing his garment as an evidence that he had offered violence to her, which was a plain indication that she had offered violence to him. Note, Those that have broken the bonds of modesty, will never be held by the bonds of truth. She that had impudence enough to say *lie with me*, no marvel she had front enough to say, He would have lain with me. Had the lie been told to conceal her own crime, it had been bad enough, yet in some degree excusable, but it was told to be revenged upon his virtue; a most malicious lie. And yet, (2.) She manages it so, as to incense her husband against him, reflecting upon him for bringing this Hebrew servant among them, perhaps at first against her mind, because he was a Hebrew. Note, it is no new thing for the best of men to be falsely accused of the worst of crimes, by those who themselves are the worst of criminals. As this matter here was represented, one would have thought chaste Joseph a very ill man, and his wanton mistress a virtuous woman; it is well there is a day of discovery coming in which all shall appear in their true characters. This was not the first time that Joseph's coat was made use of as a false witness concerning him; his father had been deceived by it before, now his master.

19. And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his Wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. 20. And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21. But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hands all the prisoners that were in the prison: and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him: and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.

Here is, 1. *Joseph wronged by his master*. He believed the accusation, and either Joseph durst not make his defence by telling the truth, it would reflect too much upon his mistress, or his master would not hear it, or would not believe it, and there is no remedy, he is condemned to perpetual imprisonment, *ver. 19, 20*. God *restrained his wrath*, else he had put him to death, and that wrath which imprisoned him, God made to turn to his praise, in order to which providence so disposed, that he should be clapt up among the king's prisoners, the state prisoners. Potiphar it is likely chose that prison, because it was the worst, for there the *irons into entered the soul*, *Psal. cv. 18*. but God designed to pave the way to his enlargement. He was committed to the king's prison, that from thence he might be preferred to the king's person. Note, Many an action of false imprisonment will in the great day be found to lie against the enemies and persecutors of God's people. Our Lord Jesus, like Joseph here, was bound, and *numbered with the transgressors*.

2. *Joseph owned and righted by his God*, who is and will be the just and powerful patron of oppressed innocency, Joseph was at a distance from all his friends and relations, had not them with him to comfort him, or to minister to him, or mediate for him, but the *Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy*, *ver. 21*. Note, 1. God *despiset not his prisoners*, *Psal. lxxix. 33*. No gates nor bars can shut out his gracious presence from his people, for he has promised he will never leave them. 2. Those that have a good conscience in a prison have a good God there. Integrity and uprightness qualifies us for the divine favour wherever we are. Joseph has not been long a prisoner, but he becomes a little ruler even in the prison, which is to be attributed, under God, 1. To the keeper's favour. God *gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison*. Note, God can raise up friends for his people, even there where they little expect to find them, and can *make them to be pitied* even of those that carry them captive, *Psal. cvi. 46*. 2. To Joseph's fitness for business. The keeper saw that God was with him, and that every thing prospered under his hand, and therefore intrusted him with the management of the affairs of the prison, *ver. 22, 23*. Note, Wisdom and virtue will shine in the narrowest spheres. A good man will do good wherever he is, and



and will be a blessing even in the bonds and banishments, for the spirit of the Lord is not bound or banished; witness St Paul, *Phil. i. 12, 13.*

C H A P. XL.

*In this chapter things are working, tho' slowly, towards Joseph's advancement. 1. Two of Pharaoh's servants are committed to prison, and there, to Joseph's care, and so become witnesses of his extraordinary conduct, ver. 1—4. 2. They dreamed each of them a dream, which Joseph interpreted, ver. 5—19. and the event verified the interpretation, ver. 20—22. and so they became witnesses of his extraordinary skill. 3. Joseph recommends his case to one of them whose preferment he foresaw, ver. 14, 15. but in vain, ver. 23.*

1. **A**ND it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker, had offended their lord the king of Egypt. 2. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. 3. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. 4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; and they continued a season in ward.

We should not have had this story of Pharaoh's butler and baker, recorded in Scripture, if it had not been serviceable to Joseph's preferment. The world stands for the sake of the church, and is governed for it's good. Observe, 1. Two of the great officers of Pharaoh's court having offended the king are committed to prison. Note, High places are slippery places; nothing more uncertain, than the favour of princes. Those that make God's favour their happiness, and his service their business, will find him a better master than Pharaoh was, and not so extream to mark what they do amiss. Many conjectures there are concerning the offence of these servants of Pharaoh, some make it no less than an attempt to take away his life, others no more but the casual lighting of a fly into his cup, and a little sand into his bread: Whatever it was, providence by this means brought them into the prison where Joseph was. 2. The captain of the guard himself, which was Potiphar, charged Joseph with them, (*ver. 4.*) which intimates, that he began now to be reconciled to him, and perhaps to be convinced of his innocence, tho' he durst not release him for fear of disobliging his wife. John Baptist must lose his head, to please Herodias.

5. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream; the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. 6. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold they were sad. 7. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lords house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? 8. And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them I pray you. 9. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me. 10. And in the vine were three branches: and it was as tho it budded, and her blossoms shot forth? and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes. 11. And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. 12. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days. 13. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. 14. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness I pray thee unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house. 15. For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. 16. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good; he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and behold I had three white baskets, on my head. 17. And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket

upon my head. 18. And Joseph answered, and said, This is the interpretation thereof: the three baskets are three days. 19. Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

Observe, 1. The special providence of God which filled the heads of these two prisoners with unusual dreams, such as made extraordinary impressions upon them, and carried with them evidences of a divine original, both in one night. Note, God has an immediate access to the spirits of men, which he can make serviceable to his own purposes whenever he pleases, quite beyond the intention of those concerned. To him all hearts are open, and antiently he spoke not only to his own people but to others in dreams, *Job xxxiii. 15.* Things to come were thus foretold, but very obscurely.

Observe, 2. The impression which was made upon these prisoners by their dreams, *ver. 6.* they were sad. It was not the prison that made them sad, they were pretty well used to that, and perhaps lived jovially there, but the dream. Note, God has more ways than one to sadden the spirits of those that are to be made sad. Those sinners that are hardy enough under outward troubles, and will not yield to them, yet God can find out a way to trouble them, and take off their wheels, by wounding their spirits, and laying load upon them.

Observe, 3. Joseph's great tenderness and compassion towards them. He enquired with concern, *Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? ver. 7.* Joseph was their keeper, and in that office he was mild. Note, It becomes us to take cognizance of the sorrows even of those that are under our check. Joseph was their companion in tribulation, he was now a prisoner with them, and had been a dreamer too. Note, Communion in sufferings, helps to work compassion towards those that do suffer. Let us learn hence, 1. To concern ourselves in the sorrows and troubles of others, and enquire into the reason of the sadness of our brethrens countenances; we should be often considering the tears of the oppressed, *Ecc. iv. 1.* It is some relief to those that are in trouble to be taken notice of. 2. To enquire into the causes of our own sorrow, Wherefore do I look so sadly? Is there a reason? Is it a good reason? Is there not a reason for comfort sufficient to balance it, whatever it is? Why art thou cast down, O my soul.

Observe, 4. The dreams themselves and the interpretation of them. That which troubled these prisoners was that being confined, they could not have recourse to the diviners of Egypt who pretended to interpret dreams, there is no interpreter here in the prison, *ver. 8.* Note, There are interpreters which those that are in prison and sorrow should wish to have with them, to instruct them in the meaning and design of providence, *an interpreter, one among a thousand to shew unto man his uprightness, Job xxxiii. 23, 24.* Interpreters to guide their consciences, not to satisfy their curiosity. Joseph hereupon directed them which way to look, *Do not interpretations belong to God,* he means the God whom he worshipped, to the knowledge of whom he endeavours hereby to lead them. Note, 1. It is God's prerogative to foretel things to come, *Isa. xlv. 10.* 2. He must therefore have the praise of all the gifts of foresight which men have, ordinary or extraordinary. Joseph premiseth a caveat against his own praise, and is careful to transmit the glory to God, as *Daniel*, chap. ii. 30. Joseph suggests, if *interpretations belong to God,* he is a free agent, and may communicate the power to whom he pleases, and therefore tell me your dreams.

Now, (1.) The chief butler's dream was a happy presage of his enlargement, and re-advancement, within three days, and so Joseph explained it to him, *ver. 12, 13.* Probably it had been usual with him to press the full ripe grapes immediately into Pharaoh's cup, the simplicity of that age not being acquainted with the modern arts of making the wine fine. Observe, Joseph foretold the chief butler's deliverance, but he did not foresee his own. He had long before dreamt of his own honour, and the obeisance which his brethren should do to him, with the remembrance of which he ought now to support himself, without any new or fresh discoveries. The visions that are for the comfort of God's saints are for a great while to come, and relate to things that are very far off, whilst others foresights, like this here, look but three days before them.

(2.) The chief baker's dream portended his ignominious death, *ver. 18, 19.* The happy interpretation of the other dream encouraged him to relate his. Thus hypocrites when they hear good things promised to good Christians would put in for a share, tho' they have no part or lot in the matter. It was not Joseph's fault that he brought him no better tidings, ministers are but interpreters, they cannot make the thing otherwise than it is; if therefore they deal faithfully, and their message prove displeasing, it is not their fault. Bad dreams cannot expect a good interpretation.

Observe, 5. The improvement Joseph made of this opportunity to get a friend at court, *ver. 14, 15.* He modestly bespoke the favour of the chief butler, whose preferment he foretold. But *think on me, when it shall be well with thee.* Though the respect paid



paid to Joseph made the prison as easy to him as a prison could be, yet none can blame him to be desirous of liberty. See here, 1. What a modest representation he makes of his own case, *ver. 15*. He doth not reflect upon his brethren that sold him, only faith, *I was stolen out of the land of the Hebrews, i. e. unjustly sent thence*, no matter where the fault was. Nor doth he reflect on the wrong done him in this imprisonment by his mistress that was his prosecutrix, and his master that was his judge, but mildly avers his own innocency, *here have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon*. Note, When we are called to vindicate ourselves we should carefully avoid as much as may be speaking ill of others. Let us be content to prove ourselves innocent, and not fond of upbraiding others with their guilt. 2. What a modest request he makes to the chief butler; only, think on me. Pray do me a kindness if it lie in your way. And his particular petition is, bring me out of this house. He doth not say, bring me into Pharaoh's house, get me a place at court, No, he begs for enlargement, not preferment. Note, Providence sometimes designs the greatest honours for those that least covet or expect them.

20. And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birth-day, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler, and of the chief baker among his servants. 21. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: 22. But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph but forgot him.

Here is, 1. The verifying of Joseph's interpretation of the dreams, on the very day prefixed. The chief butler and baker were both advanced, one to his office, the other to the gallows, and both at the three days end. Note, very great changes both for the better, and for the worse, often happen in a very little time: so sudden are the revolutions of the wheel of nature. The occasion of giving judgment severally upon their case was the solemnizing of Pharaoh's birth-day, on which all his servants being obliged by custom to attend him, these two came to be enquired after, and the cause of their commitment looked into. The solemnizing of the birth-days of princes has been an antient piece of respect done them, and if it be not abused as Jeroboam's was, *Hof. vii. 5*, and *Herod's Mar. vii. 21*, is a usage innocent enough: and we may all profitably take notice of our birth-days, with thankfulness for the mercies of our birth, sorrow for the sinfulness of it, and an expectation of the day of our death as better than the day of our birth. On Pharaoh's birth-day he lifted up the head of these two prisoners, *i. e. arraigned and tried them*, (when Naboth was tried he was set on high among the people, *1 Kings xxi. 9*.) and he restored the chief butler, and hanged the chief baker. If the butler were innocent, and the baker guilty, we must own the equity of providence in clearing up the innocency of the innocent, and making the sin of the guilty to find them out. If either both were equally innocent, or equally guilty, it is an instance of the arbitrariness of such great princes, who pride themselves in that power which Nebuchadnezzar set up for, *Dan. v. 19*, whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive, forgetting that there is a higher than they, to whom they are accountable.

2. The disappointing of Joseph's expectation from the chief butler, he remembered not Joseph but forgot him, *ver. 23*. 1. See here an instance of base ingratitude; Joseph had deserved well at his hands, had ministered to him, sympathized with him, helped him to a favourable interpretation of his dreams, had recommended himself to him as an extraordinary person upon all accounts, and yet he forgot him. We must not think it strange if we have hatred shewed us for our love, and flights for our respects in this world. 2. See how apt those that are themselves at ease are to forget others in distress. Perhaps it is in allusion to this story that the prophet speaks of those that drunk wine in bowls, and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph, *Amos vi. 6*.

3. Let us learn from hence to cease from man. Joseph perhaps depended too much upon his interest in the chief butler, and promised himself too much from him, and learned by his disappointment to trust in God only. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. Lastly, some observe the resemblance between Joseph and Christ in this story. Joseph's fellow-sufferers were like the two thieves that were crucified with Christ; the one saved, the other condemned. (It is Dr Lightfoot's remark, from Mr Broughton.) One of these when Joseph said to him, *Remember me when it shall be well with thee*, forgot him; but one of those when he said to Christ, *Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*, was not forgotten. We justly blame the chief butler's ingratitude to Joseph, yet we carry ourselves much more disingenuously to the Lord Jesus. Joseph had but foretold the chief butler's enlargement, but Christ wrought out ours, mediated with the King of Kings for us; yet we forgot him, though often minded of him, though we have promised

never to forget him; thus ill do we requite him like foolish people and unwise.

## C H A P. XLI.

Two things providence is here bringing about. 1. The advancement of Joseph. 2. The maintenance of Jacob and it's family in a time of famine, for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth, and direct the affairs of the children of men for the benefit of those few whose hearts are upright with him. In order to these, here is, 1. Pharaoh's dreams, *ver. 1—8*. 2. The recommendation of Joseph to him for an interpreter, *ver. 9—13*. 3. The interpretation of the dreams, and the prediction of seven years plenty, and seven years famine in Egypt, with the prudent advice given to Pharaoh thereupon, *ver. 14—36*. 4. The preferment of Joseph to a place of the highest power and trust in Egypt, *ver. 37—45*. 5. The accomplishment of Joseph's prediction, and his fidelity to his trust, *ver. 46*, ad fin.

1. **A**ND it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed, and behold, he stood by the river. 2. And behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine; and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow. 3. And behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed; and stood by the other kine, upon the brink of the river. 4. And the ill-favoured and lean-fleshed kine, did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. 5. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. 6. And behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east-wind sprung up after them. 7. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears: and Pharaoh awoke, and behold it was a dream. 8. And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise-men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

Observe, 1. The delay of Joseph's enlargement, it was not till the end of two full years, (*ver. 1*.) so long he waited after he had intrusted the chief butler with his case, and began to have some prospect of relief. Note, We have need of patience, not only bearing but waiting patience. Joseph lay in prison until the time that his word came, *Psal. cv. 19*. There is a time set for the deliverance of God's people that time will come, though it seem to tarry, and when it comes, it will appear to have been the best time, and therefore we ought to wait for it (*Hab. ii. 3*.) and not think two full years too long to continue waiting.

2. The means of Joseph's enlargement, which was Pharaoh's dreams, which are here related. If we were to look upon them as ordinary dreams, we might observe from them the follies and absurdities of a roving working fancy; how it represents to itself tame cows, as beasts of prey, nay more ravenous than any, eating up those of their own kind; and ears of corn devouring one another. Surely in multitude of dreams, nay, even in one dream, there are divers vanities, *Eccl. v. 7*. Now God no longer speaks to us in that way, I think it is no matter how little we either heed them, or tell them. Foolish dreams related can make no better than foolish talk. But these dreams which Pharaoh dreamed carried their own evidence with them that they were sent of God. And therefore when he awoke, his spirit was troubled, *ver. 8*. It cannot but put us into a concern to receive any extraordinary message from Heaven, because we are conscious to ourselves that we have no reason to expect any good tidings from thence. His magicians were puzzled, the rules of their art failed them, these dreams of Pharaoh's it seems did not fall within the compass of them, so that they could not offer at the interpretation of them. This was to make Joseph's performance by the spirit of God the more admirable. Human reason, prudence, and foresight must be non-plussed, that divine revelation may appear the more glorious in the contrivance of our redemption, *1 Cor. ii. 13, 14*. Compare with this story, *Dan. ii. 27—iv. 7—v. 8*. Joseph's own dreams were the occasion of his troubles, and now Pharaoh's dreams were the occasion of his enlargement.

9. Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day. 10. Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guards house, both me and the chief baker. 11. And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he: we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.



dream. 12. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams: to each man according to his dream he did interpret. 13. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us; so it was: me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged. 14. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph; and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: And he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. 15. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream, to interpret it. 16. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

Here is, 1. The recommending of Joseph to Pharaoh for an interpreter. The chief butler did it more in complement to Pharaoh, to oblige him, than in gratitude to Joseph, or compassion of his case. He makes a fair confession, *ver. 9. I remember my faults this day*, in forgetting Joseph. Note, It is best to remember our duty, and to do it in it's time, but if we have neglected that, it is next best to remember our faults, and repent of them, and do our duty at last: better late than never. Some think he means his faults against Pharaoh, for which he was imprisoned, and then he would insinuate; that though Pharaoh had forgiven him, he had not forgiven himself. The story he had to tell was in short, That there was an obscure young man in the king's prison who had very happily interpreted his dream, and the chief baker's, and the event agreed thereto, and he would recommend him to the king his master for an interpreter. Note, God's time for the enlargement of his people, will appear at last to be the fittest time. If the chief butler had at first used his interest for Joseph's enlargement, and had obtained it, it is probable upon his release he would have gone back to the land of the Hebrews again, which he spoke of so feelingly, chap. xl. 15. and then he had neither been so blessed himself, nor such a blessing to his family, as afterwards he proved. But staying two years longer, and coming out now upon this occasion at last to interpret the king's dreams, way was made for his very great preferment. Those that patiently wait for God shall be paid for their waiting, not only principal but interest, *Lam. iii. 26.*

2. The introducing of Joseph to Pharaoh, The king's business required haste, Joseph is sent for out of the dungeon with all speed, Pharaoh's order discharged him both from his imprisonment, and from his servitude, and makes him a candidate for some of the highest trusts at court. The king can scarce allow him time, but that decency required it, to shave himself, and to change his raiment, *ver. 14.* It is done with all possible expedition, and Joseph is brought in perhaps almost as much surprized as Peter was, *Acts xii. 9.* so suddenly is his captivity brought back that he is as one that dreams, *Psal. cxxvi. 1.* Pharaoh immediately, without inquiring who or whence he was, tells him his business, that he expected he should interpret his dream, *ver. 15.* To which Joseph makes him a very modest decent reply, *ver. 16.* in which, 1. He gives honour to God. It is not in me, God must give it. Note, Great gifts then appear most graceful and illustrious, when those that have them use them humbly, and take not the praise of them to themselves, but give it to God. To such God gives more grace. 2. He shews respect to Pharaoh, and hearty good will to him and his government, in supposing that the interpretation would be an answer of peace. Note, Those that consult God's oracles may expect an answer of peace. If Joseph be made the interpreter, hope the best.

17. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph in my dream, behold I stood upon the bank of the river. 18. And behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fat fleshed, and well-favoured; and they fed in a meadow. 19. And behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favoured, and lean-fleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness. 20. And the lean and the ill-favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine. 21. And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them: but they were still ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke: 22. And I saw in my dream, and behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good. 23. And behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east-wind, sprang up after them. 24. And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it unto me. 25. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26.

The seven good kine are seven years: and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27. And the seven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them, are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east-wind, shall be seven years of famine. 28. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do, he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt. 30. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine, and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt: and the famine shall consume the land. 31. And the plenty shall not be known in the land, by reason of that famine following: for it shall be very grievous. 32. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

Here 1. Pharaoh relates his dream. He dreamt that he stood upon the bank of the river Nilus, and saw the kine both the fat ones, and the lean ones, come out of the river. For the kingdom of Egypt had no rain, as appears, *Zech. xiv. 18*, but the plenty of the year depended upon the over-flowing of river, and it was about one certain time of the year that it over-flowed. If it rose to fifteen or sixteen cubits, there was plenty, if to twelve or thirteen only, or under, there was scarcity. See how many ways providence hath of dispensing it's gifts, yet whatever the second causes are, our dependance is still the same upon the first cause, who makes every creature that to us that it is, be it rain or river.

2. Joseph interprets his dream, and tells him that it signified seven years of plenty now immediately to ensue, which should be succeeded by as many years of famine. 1. The two dreams signify the same thing, but the repetition was to note both the certainty, the nearness, and the importance, of the event, *ver. 32.* Thus hath God often shewed *the immutability of his council by two immutable things*, Heb. vi. 17, 18. The covenant is sealed with two sacraments; and in the one of them there is both bread and wine, wherein the dream is one, and yet it is doubled, for the thing is certain. 2. Yet the two dreams had a distinct reference to the two things wherein are most experience, plenty and scarcity, *viz.* grass and corn. The plenty and scarcity of grass for the cattle was signified by the fat kine and the lean ones; the plenty and scarcity of herb for the service of man, by the full ears and the thin ones.

3. See what changes the comforts of this life, are subject to. After great plenty may come great scarcity, how strong soever we may think our mountain stands, if God speak the word it will soon be moved. We cannot be sure that *tomorrow shall be as this day*, next year as this, and *much more abundant*, Isa. lvi. 12. We must learn how to want, as well as how to abound.

4. See the goodness of God in sending the seven years of plenty before those of famine, that provision might be made accordingly. Thus he *sets the one over against the other*, Eccl. vii. 14. How wonderful wisely has providence, that great house-keeper, ordered the affairs of this numerous family from the beginning hitherto! Great variety of seasons there have been, and the produce of the earth, sometimes more, and sometimes less, yet take one time with another, what was miraculous concerning the manna, is ordinarily verified in the common course of providence, *He that gathers much has nothing over, and he that gathers little has no lack*, Exod. xvi. 18.

5. See the perishing nature of our worldly enjoyments. The great increase of the years of plenty was quite lost and swallowed up in the years of famine, and the over-plus of it, which seemed very much, yet did but just serve to keep men alive, *ver. xxi. 30, 31. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. There is bread which endures to everlasting life, which shall not be forgotten, and which it is worth while to labour for, Joh. vi. 27. They that make the things of this world *their good things*, will find but little pleasure in remembering that they *have received them*, Luke xvi. 25. 6. Observe, That God revealed this before-hand to Pharaoh, who, as king of Egypt, was to be the father of his country, and to make prudent provision for them. Magistrates are called shepherds, whose care it must be not only to rule, but to feed.

33. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. 35. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which



which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine. 37. And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. 38. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is? 39. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. 40. Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linnen, and put a gold chain about his neck. 43. And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. 44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. 45. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On: and Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

Here is 1. the good advice that Joseph gave to Pharaoh, which was, (1.) That in the years of plenty he should lay up for the years of famine; buy up corn when it was cheap, that he might both enrich himself, and supply the country, when it would be dear and scarce. Note, 1. Fair warning should always be followed with good counsel. Therefore the prudent man foresees the evil that he may hide himself. God has in his word told us of a day of trial and exigence before us, when we shall need all the grace we can get, and all little enough, Now therefore provide accordingly. 2. Times of gathering must be diligently improved, because there will come a time of spending. Let us go to the ant, and learn of her this wisdom, *Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8.* (2.) Because that which is everybody's work, commonly proves nobody's work, he advises Pharaoh to appoint officers who should make it their business, and pitch upon some one person to preside in the affair, *ver. 33.* Probably if Joseph had not advised this, it not not been done; Pharaoh's counsellors could no more improve the dream than his magicians interpret, therefore it is said of him, *Psal. cv. 22.* that he taught the senators wisdom. That of Solomon may be inferred from hence, *Eccl. iv. 13.* Better is a poor and a wise child, than an old and foolish king.

2. The great honour that Pharaoh did to Joseph. (1.) He gave him an honourable testimony. He is a man in whom the spirit of God is, and that puts a great excellency upon any man, such men ought to be valued, *ver. 38.* He is a non-such for prudence, *There is none so discreet and wise as thou art, ver. 39.* Now he is abundantly recompensed for the disgrace that had been done him, and his righteousness is as the morning light, *Psal. xxxvii. 6.* (2.) He puts him into an honourable office; not only employed him to buy up corn, but made him prime-minister of state, comptroller of the household, *Thou shalt be over my house,* chief justice of the kingdom, *according to thy word, shall all my people be ruled.* Or, *shall be armed,* as some read it, and then it speaks him general of the forces. His commission was very ample, *I have set thee over all the land of Egypt, ver. 41.* without thee no man shall lift up his hand or foot, *ver. 44.* all the affairs of the kingdom must pass through his hand. Nay, *ver. 40.* Only in the Throne will I be greater than thou. Note, It is the wisdom of princes to prefer those, and the happiness of people to have those preferred to places of power and trust, in whom the spirit of God is. It is probable, there were those about court that opposed Joseph's preferment, which occasioned Pharaoh so oft to repeat the grant, and with that solemn sanction, *ver. 44, I am Pharaoh.* When the proposal was made that there should be a corn-master-general nominated, it is said, *ver. 37, Pharaoh's servants were all pleased* with the motion, each hoping for the place, but when Pharaoh said to them, Joseph shall be the man, we do not read that they made him any answer, being uneasy at it, and acquiescing only because they could not help it; Joseph had enemies no doubt, archers that shot at him, and hated him, *chap. xlix. 23.* as *Daniel, chap. vi. 4.* (3.) He put upon him all the marks of honour imaginable, to recommend him to the esteem and respect of the people as the king's favourite, and one whom he delighted to honour. (1.) He gave him his own ring, as a ratification of his commission, and in token of peculiar favour; or it was like delivering him the great seal. (2.) He put fine cloaths upon him, instead of his prison garments. For they that are in kings palaces, must wear soft cloathing; he that in the morning was dragging his fetters of iron, before night was adorned with a chain of gold. (3.) He made him ride in the second chariot next his own, and ordered all to do obeisance to him. *Bow the knee,* as to Pharaoh himself. (4.) He gave him a new name, to shew his authority over him,

and yet such a name as spoke the value he had for them, Zaphnath-paaneah, a revealer of secrets. (5.) He married him honourably to a prince's daughter. Where God had been liberal in giving wisdom and other merits, Pharaoh was not sparing in conferring honours. Now this preferment of Joseph was (4.) an abundant recompence for his innocent and patient suffering, a lasting instance of the equity and goodness of providence; and an encouragement to all good people to trust in a good God. (2.) It was typical of the exaltation of Christ, that great revealer of secrets, (*Job. i. 18.*) or as some translate Joseph's new name, the *Saviour of the world.* The brightest glories of the upper world are put upon him, the highest trust lodged in his hand, and all power given him both in Heaven and earth. He is gatherer, keeper, and disposer, of all the stores of divine grace, and chief ruler of the kingdom of God among men. The work of ministers is to cry before him, *Bow the knee; kiss the son.*

46. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt: and Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47. And in the seven plentiful years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. 49. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering: for it was without number. 50. And unto Joseph were born two sons, before the years of famine came: which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On, bare unto him. 51. And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. 52. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. 53. And the seven years of plentifulness that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. 54. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55. And when all the land of Egypt were famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: And Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. 56. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the store houses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. 57. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

Observe here, 1. The building of Joseph's family in the birth of two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, *ver. 50, 51, 52.* In the names he gave them, he owned the divine providence giving this happy turn to his affairs, (1.) He was made to forget his misery, *Job xi. 16.* We should bear our afflictions when they are present, as those that know not but providence may so out-weigh them by after-comforts, as that we may even forget them when they are past. But could he be so unnatural as to forget all his father's house? He means the unkindnesses he received from his brethren, or perhaps the wealth and honour he expected from his father, with the birth-right. The robes he now wore made him forget the coat of divers colours he wore in his father's house. (2.) He was made fruitful in the land of his affliction, it had been the land of his affliction, and in some sense it was still so, for it was not Canaan, the land of promise. His distance from his father was still his affliction. Note, Light is sometimes sown for the righteous in barren and unlikely soil, and yet if God sow it, and water it, it will come up again. The afflictions of the saints promote their fruitfulness. Ephraim signifies fruitfulness, and Manasseh forgetfulness, for these two oft go together, when Jehurun waxed fat, he forgot God his maker.

2. The accomplishment of Joseph's predictions, Pharaoh had a great confidence, in the truth of them, perhaps finding in his own mind, beyond what another persons could an exact agreeableness between them, and his dreams as between the key and the lock; and the event shewed that he was not deceived. The seven plentiful years came, *ver. 47,* and at length they were ended, *ver. 53.* Note, We ought to foresee the approaching period of the days, both of our prosperity and of our opportunity, and therefore must not be secure in the enjoyment of our prosperity, nor slothful in the improvement of our opportunity; years of plenty will end, therefore what thy hand finds to do, do it; and gather in gathering time: *The morning cometh, and also the night, Isa. xxi. 12.* The plenty and also the famine. *ver. 54.* the seven years of dearth began to come: See what changes of condition we are liable to in this world, and what need



need we have to be joyful in a day of prosperity, and in a day of adversity to consider, *Eccl. vii. 14.* This famine, it seems, was not only in Egypt, but in other lands, in *all lands*, i.e. all the neighbouring countries; *fruitful lands* are soon turned into *barrenness*, by the iniquity of them that dwell therein, *Psal. cvii. 34.* It is here said, that *in the land of Egypt there was bread*, meaning probably not that only which Joseph had bought up for the king, but that which private persons, by his example, and upon the publick notice of this prediction, as well as by the rules of common prudence, had laid up.

3. The performance of Joseph's trust; he was found faithful to it, as a steward ought to be.

1. He was diligent in laying up while the plenty lasted, *ver. 48;* 49. He that thus gathers is a wise son.

2. He was prudent and careful in giving out when the famine came, and kept the markets low by furnishing them at reasonable rates out of his stores. The people in distress cried to Pharaoh, as that woman to the king of Israel, *2 Kings vi. 26.* *Help my lord, O king:* he sent them to his treasurer, *Go to Joseph.* Thus God in the gospel directs those that apply themselves to him for mercy and grace, to *go to the Lord Jesus*, in whom all fulness dwells, and, *what he saith to you, do.* Joseph, no doubt, with wisdom and justice fixed the price of the corn he sold, so that Pharaoh, whose money had bought it up, might have reasonable profit, and yet the country might not be oppressed, nor advantage taken of their prevailing necessity; while *he that withholdeth corn*, when it is dear, in hopes it will yet grow dearer, and people perish for want of it, has *many a curse* for so doing, and it is not *a curse causeless, blessings shall be upon the head of him that thus selleth it*, *Prov. xi. 26.* And let the price be determined by that golden rule of justice, to do as we would be done by.

## C H A P. XLII.

*We had in the foregoing chapter the fulfilling of the dreams which Joseph had interpreted: in this and the following chapters we have the fulfilling of the dreams which Joseph himself had dreamed, that his father's family should do obeisance to him. The story is very largely and particularly related of what passed between Joseph and his brethren, not only because it is an entertaining story, and probably was much talked of, both among the Israelites, and among the Egyptians, but because it is very instructive, and it gave occasion for the removal of Jacob's family into Egypt, on which so many great events afterwards depended. We have in this chapter, 1. The humble application of Jacob's sons to Joseph, to buy corn, *ver. 1—6.* 2. The fright Joseph put them into, for their trial, *ver. 7—20.* 3. The conviction they were now under of their sin concerning Joseph long before, *ver. 21—24.* 4. Their return to Canaan with corn, and the great distress their good father was in, upon the account they gave him of their expedition, *ver. 25, ad fin.**

1. **N**OW when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? 2. And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. 3. And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. 4. But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren: for he said, lest peradventure mischief befall him. 5. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. 6. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him, with their faces to the earth.

Though Jacob's sons were all married, and had families of their own, yet it should seem they were still incorporated in one society under the conduct and presidency of their father Jacob: And here we have, 1. The orders he gave them to go and buy corn in Egypt, *ver. 1,* 2. Observe, 1. The famine was grievous in the land of Canaan. It is observable that all the three Patriarchs, to whom Canaan was the land of promise, met with famine in that land; which was not only to try their faith, whether they could trust God, though he slay them, tho' he starve them, but to teach them to seek the better country, that is, the heavenly, *Heb. xi. 14, 15.* We have need of something to wean us from this world, and make us long for a better. 2. Still when there was famine in Canaan, there was corn in Egypt. Thus providence orders it, that one place should be a succour and supply to another, for all we are brethren. The Egyptians, the seed of the accursed Ham, have plenty when God's blessed Israel want. Thus God, in dispensing common favours, often crosseth hands, yet observe, the

plenty Egypt now had was owing, under God, to Joseph's prudence and care: if his brethren had not sold him into Egypt, but respected him according to his merits, who knows but he might have done the same thing for Jacob's family which now he had done for Pharaoh, and the Egyptians might then have come to them to buy corn; but those who drive away from among them wise and good men, know not what they do. 3. *Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt;* he saw the corn that his neighbours had bought there and brought home: It is a spur to endeavour to see where supplies are to be had, and to see others supplied: Shall others get food for their souls, and shall we starve while it is to be had? 4. He reproved his sons for delaying to provide corn for their families, *why do ye look one upon another?* Note, When we are in trouble and want, it is folly for us to stand looking one upon another; that is, to stand desponding and despairing, as if there were no hope, no help; to stand disputing either which shall have the honour of going first, or which shall have the safety of coming last: To stand deliberating and debating what we shall do, and doing nothing: To stand dreaming under a spirit of slumber, as if we had nothing to do; and to stand delaying as if we had time at command. Let it never be said we left that to be done to morrow which we could as well have done to day. 5. He quickened them to go to Egypt, *get ye down thither.* Masters of families must not only pray for daily bread for their families, and food convenient, but must lay out themselves, with care and industry, to provide it. 2. Their obedience to these orders, *ver. 3.* they went down to buy corn: they did not send their servants, but very prudently went themselves, to lay out their own money. Let none think themselves too great or too good to take pains. Masters of families should see with their own eyes, and take heed of leaving too much to servants. Only Benjamin went not with them, for he was his father's darling. To Egypt they came, among others, and, having a considerable cargo of corn to buy, they were brought before Joseph himself, who probably expected they would come: And, according to the laws of honour, they bowed down themselves before him, *ver. 6.* Now their empty sheaves did obeisance to his full one. Compare this with *Isa. lx. 14.* and *Rev. iii. 9.*

7. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them; but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. 8. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. 9. And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land you are come. 10. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. 11. We are all one man's sons: We are true men, thy servants are no spies. 12. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land you are come. 13. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. 14. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. 15. Hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. 16. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. 17. And he put them altogether into ward, three days. 18. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live: for I fear God. 19. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses. 20. But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

We may well wonder that Joseph, during the twenty years he had now been in Egypt, especially during the last seven years that he had been in power there, never sent to his father to acquaint him with his circumstances; nay, it is strange that he who so often went throughout all the land of Egypt, chap. xli. 45, 46. never made a step to Canaan, to visit his aged father, when he was in the borders of Egypt that lay next to Canaan, perhaps it would not have been above three or four days journey for him in his chariot. It is a probable conjecture, that his whole management of himself in this affair was by special direction from Heaven, that the purpose of God, concerning Jacob



cob and his family, might be accomplished. When Joseph's brethren came he knew them by many a good token, but they knew not him, little thinking to find him there, *ver. 8.* He remembered the dreams, *ver. 9,* but they had forgot them. The laying up of God's oracles in our hearts will be of excellent use to us in all our conduct. Joseph had an eye to his dreams, which he knew to be divine in his carriage towards his brethren, and aimed at the accomplishment of them, and the bringing of his brethren to repentance for their former sins, and both those points were gained. 1. He shewed himself very rigorous and harsh with them: the very manner of his speaking, considering the post he was in, was enough to frighten them, for *he spake roughly to them, ver. 7.* He charged them with ill designs against the government, *ver. 9,* treated them as dangerous persons, *ye are spies, protesting by the life of Pharaoh* that they were so, *ver. 16.* Some make that an oath, others make no more but a vehement asseveration, like that *as thy soul liveth,* however, it was more than yea, yea, and nay, nay, and therefore came of evil. Note, Bad words are soon learned by converse with those that use them, but not so soon unlearned: Joseph, by being much at court, got the courtier's oath, *by the life of Pharaoh,* perhaps designing hereby to confirm his brethren in their belief that he was an Egyptian, and not an Israelite: they knew this was not the language of a son of Abraham; when Peter would prove himself no disciple of Christ he cursed and swore. Now, why was Joseph thus hard upon his brethren? We may be sure it was not from a spirit of revenge that he might trample upon them now, who had formerly trampled upon him, he was not a man of that temper. But, (1.) It was to enrich his own dreams, and compleat the accomplishment of them. (2.) It was to bring them to repentance. (3.) It was to get out of them an account of the state of their family, which he longed to know: they would have discovered him if he had asked as a friend, therefore he asks as a judge. Not seeing his brother Benjamin with them, perhaps he began to suspect that they had made him away too, and therefore gives them occasion to speak of their father and brother. Note, God, in his providence, sometimes seems harsh with those he loves, and speaks roughly to those whom yet he has great mercy in store for. 2. They hereupon were very submissive; they spoke to him with all the respect imaginable, *nay, my lord, ver. 10.* a great change since they said; *Behold, this dreamer comes.* They very modestly deny the charge, *we are no spies,* they tell him their business, they came to buy food, a justifiable errand, and, the same that many strangers came to Egypt upon at this time: they undertake to give a particular account of themselves and their family, *ver. 13.* And that was it he wanted. 3. He clapped them all up in prison for three days, *ver. 17.* Thus God deals with the souls he designs for special comfort and honour, he first humbles them, and terrifies them, and brings them under a spirit of bondage, and then binds up their wounds by the spirit of adoption. 4. He concluded with them at last that one of them should be left as an hostage, and the rest should go home and fetch Benjamin. It was a very encouraging word he said to them, *ver. 18. I fear God, q. d. you may assure yourselves I will do you no wrong, I dare not, for I know that as high as I am there is one higher than I.* Note, With those that fear God we have reason to expect fair dealing: The fear of God will be a check upon those that are in power, to restrain them from abusing their power to oppression and tyranny: those that have no one else to stand in awe of, ought to stand in awe of their own consciences. See *Neh. v. 15. So did not I because of the fear of God.*

21. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us. 22. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child: and ye would not hear? therefore behold also, his blood is required. 23. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. 24. And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and he returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes. 25. Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. 26. And they laded their asses with the corn and departed thence. 27. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money: for behold it was in his sack's mouth. 28. And he said unto his brethren, my money is restored; and lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?

Here is, 1. The penitent reflection Joseph's brethren made upon the wrong they had formerly done to him, *ver. 21.* they talked the matter over in the Hebrew tongue, not suspecting that Joseph, whom they took for a native of Egypt, understood them, much less that he was the person they spoke of. (1.) They remembered with regret the barbarous cruelty wherewith they persecuted him, *we are verily guilty concerning our brother;* we do not read that they said this during their three days imprisonment, but now when the matter was come to some issue, and they saw themselves still embarrassed, now they began to relent. Perhaps Joseph's mention of the fear of God, *ver. 18,* put them upon consideration, and extorted this reflection. Now see here, 1. The office of conscience, it is a remembrancer to bring to mind things long since said and done, to shew us wherein we have erred, though it were long ago, as this reflection here was above twenty years after the sin was committed: As time will not wear out the guilt of sin, so it will not blot out the records of conscience; when the guilt of this sin of Joseph's brethren was fresh, they made light of it, and sat down to eat bread, but now, long after, their consciences minded them of it. 2. The benefit of afflictions; those often prove a happy and effectual means of awakening conscience, and bringing sin to our remembrance, *Job xiii. 26.* 3. The evil of guilt concerning our brethren; of all their sins that was it that conscience now reproached them for; whenever we think we have wrong done us, we ought to remember the wrong we have done to others, *Eccl. vii. 21, 22.* (2.) Reuben only remembered with comfort that he had been an advocate for his brother, and had done what he could to prevent the mischief they did him, *ver. 22. Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child?* Note, 1. It is an aggravation of sin that it was committed against admonitions. 2. When we come to share with others in their calamities it will be a comfort to us, if we have the testimony of our consciences for us, that we did not share with them in their iniquities, but in our places witnessed against them. This shall be our rejoicing in the day of evil, and take out the sting.

2. Joseph's tenderness towards them upon this occasion. He retired from them to weep, *ver. 24.* Tho' his reason directed that he should still carry himself as a stranger to them, because they were not as yet humbled enough, yet natural affection could not but work, for he was a man of a tender spirit. This represents the tender mercies of our God towards repenting sinners. See *Jer. xxxi. 20. Since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still.* See *Judg. x. 16.*

3. The imprisonment of Simeon, *ver. 24.* He chose him for the hostage, probably, because he remembered him to have been his most bitter enemy, or because he observed him now to be least humbled and concerned; he bound him before their eyes, to affect them all; or, perhaps it is intimated that tho' he bound him with some severity before them, yet afterwards, when they were gone, he took off his bonds.

4. The dismissal of the rest of them. They came for corn, and corn they had, and not only so, but every man had his money restored in his sack's mouth. Thus Christ, our Joseph, gives out supplies *without money and without price:* Therefore the poor are invited to buy, *Rev. iii. 17, 18.* This put them into a mighty consternation, *ver. 28, their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done to us?* 1. It was really a merciful event; I hope they had no wrong done them when they had their money given them back, but a kindness, yet they were thus terrified by it. Note, 1. Guilty consciences are apt to take good providences in a bad sense, and to put wrong constructions even upon those things that make for them. They flee when none pursues. 2. Wealth sometimes brings as much care along with it as want doth, and more too. If they had been robbed of their money they could not have been worse frightened than they were, now when they found their money in the sacks: Thus he, whose ground brought forth plentifully, said, *What shall I do?* *Luke xii. 17.* 2. Yet in their circumstances it was very amazing: they knew that the Egyptians abhorred a Hebrew, *chap. xliii. 32.* and therefore since they could not expect to receive any kindness from them, they concluded that this was done with a design to pick a quarrel with them, the rather because the man, the lord of the land, had charged them as spies. Their own consciences also were awake, and their sins set in order before them, and this puts them into confusion. Note, (1.) When men's spirits are sinking every thing helps to sink them. (2.) When the events of providence concerning us are surprizing, it is good to enquire what it is that God has done, and is doing with us, and to consider the operation of his hands.

29. And they came unto Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befel unto them, saying, 30. The man who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 31. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies. 32. We be twelve brethren, sons of our father: one is not, and the young-



est is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. 33. And the man the lord of the country said unto us; Hereby shall I know that ye are true true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. 34. And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that you are no spies, but that you are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land. 35. And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that behold, every mans bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. 37. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. 38. And he said, My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

Here is, 1. The report which Jacob's sons made to their father of the great distress they had been in in Egypt, how they had been suspected, and threatened, and obliged to leave Simeon a prisoner there till they should bring Benjamin with them thither. Who would have thought of this when they left home? When we go abroad we should consider how many sad accidents, that we little think of, may befall us before we return home, *we know not what a day may bring forth*, we ought therefore to be always ready for the worst.

2. The deep impression this made upon the good man: The very bundles of money which Joseph returned in kindness to his father frightened him, *ver. 35*, for he concluded it was done with some mischievous design, or, perhaps suspected his own sons to have done some ill thing, and so to have run themselves into a *præmunire*; which is intimated in what he saith, *ver. 36. Me have ye bereaved*. He seems to lay the fault upon them, knowing their characters, he feared they had provoked the Egyptians, and, perhaps, forcibly or fraudulently brought home their money. Jacob is here much out of temper. 1. He has very melancholy apprehensions concerning the present state of his family, *Joseph is not, and Simeon is not*, whereas Joseph was in honour, and Simeon in the way to it. Note, We often perplex ourselves with our own mistakes, even in matter of fact. True griefs may arise from false intelligence and suppositions, 2 *Sam. xiii. 31*. Jacob gives up Joseph for gone, and Simeon and Benjamin in danger, and concludes, *all these things are against me*. It proved otherwise, that all these were for him, were working together for his good, and the good of his family, yet here he thinks them all against him. Note; Through our ignorance and mistake, and the weakness of our faith, we often apprehend that to be against us which is really for us. We are afflicted in body, estate, name, relations, and we think all these things are against us, whereas these are really working for us the weight of glory. 2. He is at present resolved that Benjamin shall not go down. Reuben will undertake to bring him back in safety, *ver. 30*, not so much as putting in; if the Lord will, nor excepting the common disasters of travellers: but he foolishly bids Jacob slay his two sons (which it is like he was very proud of) if he brought him not back, as if the death of two grand-sons could satisfy Jacob for the death of a son. No, Jacob's present thoughts are, *My son shall not go down with you*. He plainly intimates a distrust of them, remembering that he never saw Joseph since he had been with them; therefore Benjamin shall not go with you, by the way in which ye go, for ye shall bring down my gray hairs. Note, It is bad with a family when children carry themselves so ill that their parents know not how to trust them.

## C H A P. XLIII.

Here the story of Joseph's brethren is carried on; and very particularly related, 1. Their melancholy parting with their father Jacob in Canaan, *ver. 1—14*. 2. Their pleasant meeting with Joseph in Egypt, *ver. 15*, to the end, for in this chapter nothing occurs there but what was agreeable and pleasant enough.

1. **A**ND the famine was sore in the land: 2. And it came to pass when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again; buy us a little food. 3. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face; except your brother be with you. 4. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food. 5. But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face; except your brother be with you. 6. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? 7. And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred; saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenour of these words: Could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? 8. And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we; and thou, and also our little ones. 9. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever. 10. For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

Here, 1. Jacob urges his sons to go and buy corn in Egypt, *ver. 1*, 2. The famine continued; the corn they had bought was all spent, for it is meat that perisheth: Jacob, as a good master of a family, is in care to provide for those of his own house, food convenient; and shall not God provide for his children, for the household of faith? Jacob bids them go buy a little food; now in a time of scarcity a little must suffice, for nature is content with a little. 2. Judah urges him to consent that Benjamin should go down with them, how much soever it was against the grain with him. Note, It is not at all inconsistent with the honour and duty which children owe their parents humbly and modestly to advise them, and as occasion is to reason with them, *Plead with your mother, plead*, *Hos. ii. 2*. 1. He insists upon the absolute necessity they were under of bringing Benjamin with them, which he, who was a witness to all that had passed in Egypt, was a more competent judge of than Jacob could be. Joseph's protestation, *ver. 3*, may be alluded to, to shew upon what terms we must draw nigh to God; unless we bring Christ along with us in the arms of our faith, we cannot see the face of God with comfort. 2. He engages to take all possible care of him, and to do his utmost for his safety, *ver. 8, 9*. Judah's conscience had lately smitten him for what he had done a great while ago against Joseph, *chap. xlii. 21*. and as an evidence of the truth of his repentance he is ready to undertake as far as a man could do it, for Benjamin's security: He will not only not wrong him, but will do all he can to protect him. This is restitution as the case will admit; when he knew not how he could retrieve Joseph, he would make some amends for the irreparable injury he had done him, by doubling his care concerning Benjamin.

11. And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little hony, spices, and myrrhe, nuts, and almonds. 12. And take double money in your hand: and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight. 13. Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man. 14. And God Almighty give you mercy before the man; that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin: If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

Observe here, 1. Jacob's persuadableness. He would be ruled by reason, though they were his inferiors that urged it. He saw the necessity of the case, and since there was no remedy he consented to yield to the necessity, *ver. 11*, *If it must be so now, take your brother*. If no corn can be had but upon those terms,



as good expose him to the perils of the journey, as suffer ourselves and families, and Benjamin, among the rest, to perish for want of bread : *Skin for skin, and all that a man has*, even a Benjamin, the dearest of all, *will he give for his life*. No death so dreadful as that by famine, *Lam. iv. 9.* Jacob had said, *chap. xlii. 38. my son shall not go down*, but now he is overpersuaded to consent. Note, It is no fault, but our wisdom and duty, to alter our purposes and resolutions when there is a good reason for our so doing : Constancy is a virtue, but obstinacy is not. It is God's prerogative not to repent, and to make unchangeable resolves. 2. Jacob's prudence and justice, which appeared in three things. (1.) He sent back the money that they had found in the sacks mouth, with this discreet construction of it, peradventure it was an oversight. Note, Honesty obliges us to make restitution, not only of that which comes to us by our own fault, but of that which comes to us by others mistakes. Tho' we get it by oversight, if we keep it when the oversight is discovered, it is kept by deceit. In the stating of accounts errors must be excepted, even those that make for us as well those that make against us. Jacob's words furnish us with a favourable construction to put upon that which we are tempted to resent as an injury and affront, pass it by and say, Peradventure it was an oversight. (2.) He sent double money, as much again as they took the time before upon supposition that the price of corn might be risen, or that if it should be insisted upon they might pay a ransom for Simeon, or his prison fees. Or, to shew a generous spirit, that they might be the more likely to find generous treatment with *the man the lord of the land*. (3.) He sent a present of such things as the land afforded, and were scarce in Egypt, *Balm and honey, &c. ver. 11.* the commodities that Canaan exported, *Gen. xxxvii. 25.* Note, 1. Providence dispenseth it's gifts variously. Some countries produce one commodity, others another, that commerce may be preserved. 2. Honey and spice will never make up the want of bread corn : The famine was sore in Canaan, and yet they had balm and myrrh, &c. we may live well enough upon plain food without dainties, but we cannot live upon dainties without plain food. Let us thank God that that which is most needful and useful is generally most cheap and common. 3. A gift in secret pacifies wrath, *Prov. xxi. 14.* Jacob's sons were unjustly accused as spies, yet Jacob is willing to be at the expence of a present to pacify the accuser. Sometimes we must not think much to buy peace, even there where we may justly demand it, and insist upon it as our right. 3. Jacob's piety appearing in his prayer, *ver. 14. God almighty give you mercy before the man!* Jacob had formerly turned an angry brother into a kind one with a present and a prayer, and here he betakes himself to the same tried method, and it sped well. Note, Those that would find mercy with men must seek it of God, who has all hearts in his hands, and turns them as he pleaseth. 4. Jacob's patience, he concludes all with this, *If I be bereaved of my children I am bereaved*, If I must part with them thus one after another I must acquiesce and say, *The will of the Lord be done*. Note, It is our wisdom to reconcile ourselves to the worst afflictions, and make the best of them, for there is nothing got by striving with our maker, *2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.*

15. And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. 16. And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay and make ready : for these men shall dine with me at noon. 17. And the man did as Joseph bade : and the man brought the men into Josephs house. 18. And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Josephs house, and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time, are we brought in ; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bond-men, and our asses. 19. And they came near to the steward of Josephs house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, 20. And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food. 21. And it came to pass when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and behold, every mans money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight : and we have brought it again in our hand. 22. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food : we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. 23. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not : your God, and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks : I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them. 24. And the man brought the men into Josephs house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet, and he gave their asses provender. 25. And they made ready the present

against Joseph came at noon : for they heard that they should eat bread there.

Jacob's sons having got leave to take Benjamin with them, were observant of the orders their father had given them, and went down the second time into Egypt to buy corn. If we should ever know what a famine of the world means, let us not think much to travel as far for spiritual food, as they did here for corporal food. Now here we have an account of what passed between them and Joseph's steward, who some conjecture was in the secret, and knew them to be Joseph's brethren, and helped to humour the thing ; I rather think not, because no man must be present when Joseph afterwards made himself known to them, *chap. xlv. 1.*

1. Joseph's steward has orders from his master (who was busy selling corn, and receiving money) to take them to his house, and made ready for their entertainment. Though Joseph saw Benjamin there, he would not leave his work at working time, nor trust another with it. Note, business must take place of civility in it's season. Our needful employments must not be neglected, no, not to pay respect to our friends.

2. Even this frightened them, *ver. 18. they were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house*. The just challenges of their own consciences, and Joseph's violent suspicions of them forbid them to expect any favour, and suggested to them, that this was done with an ill design upon them. Note, those that are guilty and timorous are apt to make the worst of every thing. Now they thought they should be reckoned with about the money in the sack's mouth, and should be charged as cheats, and men not fit to be dealt with, who had taken advantage of the hurry of the market to carry off their corn unpaid for. They therefore lay the case before the steward, that he, being apprized of it, might stand between them and danger. And they had proof sufficient for their honesty, that before they were charged with it they produced it. Note, Integrity and uprightness will preserve us, and will clear it self as the light of the morning.

3. The steward encouraged them, *ver. 23. Peace be to you, fear not* ; though he knew not what his master drove at, yet he was aware, these were men he meant no ill to, while he thus amused them ; and therefore he directs them to look at the divine providence in the return of their money, *your God, and the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks*. Observe, (1.) Hereby he shews, that he had no suspicion at all of dishonesty in them : For what we get by deceit we cannot say, God gives it us. (2.) Hereby he silences their further enquiry about it ; ask not how it came thither, providence brought it you, and let that satisfy you. (3.) It appears by what he said, that by his good master's instructions he was brought to the knowledge of the true God, the God of the Hebrews. It may justly be expected that those who are servants in religious families should take all fit occasions to speak of God and his providence with reverence and seriousness. (4.) He directs them to look up to God, and acknowledges his providence in the good bargain they had : We must own ourselves indebted to God, as *our God, and the God of our fathers* (a God in covenant with us and them) for all our successes and advantages, and the kindnesses of our friends ; for every creature is that to us, and no more that God makes it to be. The steward encouraged them not only in words but deeds, for he made very much of them till his master came, *ver. 24.*

26. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. 27. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake ? is he yet alive ? 28. And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive : and they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. 29. And he lift up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mothers son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me ? And he said, God be gracious unto thee my son. 30. And Joseph made haste ; for his bowels did yern upon his brother : and he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. 31. And he washed his face, and went out, and restrained himself, and said, Set on bread. 32. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves : because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews ; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. 33. And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth : and the men marvelled one at another. 34. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him : but



Benjamins mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

Here is, 1. The great respect that Joseph's brethren paid to him; when they brought him the present they bowed themselves before him, *ver.* 26. and again when they gave him an account of their father's health, they made obeisance, and called him, Thy servant our father, *ver.* 28. Thus were Joseph's dreams fulfilled more and more, and even the father by the sons bowed before him, according to the dream, *chap.* xxxvii. 10. Probably Jacob had directed them; if they had occasion to speak of him to the man, the lord of the land, to call him his servant.

2. The great kindness that Joseph shewed to them, while they little thought it was a brotherly kindness. Here is, 1. His kind enquiry concerning Jacob, Is he yet alive? A very fit question to be asked concerning any, especially concerning old people, for we are dying daily; it is strange we are yet alive: Jacob had said many years before, *I will go to the grave to my son*, but he is yet alive; we must not die when we will. 2. The kind notice he took of Benjamin, his own brother. (1.) He put up a prayer for him, *ver.* 29, *God be gracious unto thee, my son.* Joseph's favour, though he was the lord of the land, would do him little good unless God were gracious to him: Many seek the ruler's favour, but God directs him to seek the favour of the ruler of rulers. (2.) He shed some tears for him, *ver.* 30. His natural affection to his brother, his joy to see him; his concern to see him, and the rest of them in distress for bread, and the remembrance of his own griefs since he last saw him, wrought a very great commotion in him, which perhaps was the more uneasy because he endeavoured to stifle and suppress it; but he was forced to retire into his closet, there to give vent to his passion by tears. Note, 1. Tears of tenderness and affection are no disparagement at all even to great and wise men. 2. Gracious weepers should not proclaim their tears, *My soul shall weep in secret*, saith the prophet, Jer. xiii. 17. *Peter went out and wept bitterly.* See Matth. vi. 17. 3. His kind entertainment of them all, when his passion of weeping was over, so that he could refrain himself, he sat down to dinner with them, treated them nobly, and yet contrives every thing to amuse them. 1. He ordered three tables to be spread, one for his brethren, and another for the Egyptians that dined with him, for so different were their customs that they did not care to eat together; another for himself, who durst not own himself a Hebrew, and yet would not sit with the Egyptians. See here an instance, (1.) Of hospitality and good house-keeping, which is a very commendable thing, according as the ability is. (2.) Of compliance with peoples humours, even whimsical ones (as Bishop Patrick calls this of the Egyptians not eating with the Hebrews:) Though Joseph was the lord of the land, and orders were given that all people should obey him, yet he would not force the Egyptians to eat with the Hebrews, against their mind, but let them enjoy their humours; spirits truly generous hate to impose. (3.) Of the early distance between Jews and Gentiles, one table would not hold them. 2. He placed his brethren according to their seniority, *ver.* 33, as if he could certainly divine. Some think they placed themselves so according to their custom; but if so, I see not why such particular notice is taken of it, especially as a thing they marvelled at. 3. He gave them a very plentiful entertainment, sent messes to them from his own table, *ver.* 34. This was the more generous in him, and the more obliging to them, because of the present scarcity of provisions. In a day of famine it is enough to be fed, but they here were feasted. Perhaps they had not had such a good dinner of many months. It is said, they drank and were merry: their cares and fears were now over, and they eat their bread with joy, concluding they were now upon good terms with the man, the lord of the land. If God accept our works, our present, we have reason to be cheerful. Yet when we sit as they here did to eat with a ruler, we should consider what is before us, and not indulge our appetite, or be desirous of dainties, Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. Joseph gave them to understand that Benjamin was his favourite, for his mess was *five times as much as any of theirs*, not as if he would have him eat so much more than the rest, for then he must eat more than would do him good; and it is no act of friendship, but an injury and unkindness rather, to press any either to eat or drink to excess. But thus he would testify his particular respect for him, that he might try whether his brethren would envy Benjamin his larger messes, as formerly they had envied him his finer coat. And it must be our rule, in such cases, to be content with what we have, and not to grieve at what others have.



## C H A P. XLIV.

*Joseph having entertained his brethren dismissed them; but here we have them brought back in a greater fright than any they had been in yet. Observe, 1. What method he took, both to humble them further, and also to try their affection to his brother Benjamin, by which he would be able to judge of the sincerity of their repentance for what they had done against him, which he was desirous to be satisfied of, before he manifested his reconciliation to them. This he contrived to do by bringing Benjamin into distress, ver. 1—17. 2. The good success of the experiment; he found them all heartily concerned, and Judah particularly, both for the safety of Benjamin, and for the comfort of their aged father, ver. 18—34.*

1. **A**ND he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the mens sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every mans money in his sacks mouth. 2. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sacks mouth of the youngest, and his corn-money: and he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they, and their asses. 4. And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? 5. Is not this it in which my lord drinketh? and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. 6. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. 7. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing. 8. Behold the money which we found in our sacks mouths, we brought again unto thee, out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lords house silver or gold? 9. With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lords bond-men. 10. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. 11. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. 12. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamins sack. 13. Then they rent their cloaths, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. 14. And Judah and his brethren came to Josephs house (for he was yet there) and they fell before him on the ground. 15. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? 16. And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lords servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. 17. And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

Here, 1. Joseph heaps further kindnesses upon his brethren, fills their sacks, and returns their money, and sends them away merry enough. But, 2. He exerciseth them with further trials: Our God thus humbles those whom he loves and loads with benefits. Joseph ordered his steward to put a fine silver cup which he had, (and which it is likely was used at his table when they dined with him) into Benjamin's sack's mouth, that it might seem as if he had stolen it from the table, and put it there himself, after his corn was delivered him. If Benjamin had stolen it, it had been the basest piece of dishonesty and ingratitude that could be; and if Joseph, by ordering it to be put there, had designed really to take advantage against him, it had been in him most horrid cruelty and oppression, but it proved in the issue there was no harm done, nor any designed on either side. Observe, 1. How the pretended criminals were pursued and arrested, on suspicion of having stolen a silver cup. The steward charged them with ingratitude, rewarding evil for good; with folly in taking away a cup of daily use, and which therefore would soon be missed, and diligent search made for it; for so it may be read, *ver.* 5. *Is not that it in which my lord drinketh*, (as having a particular fondness for it) *and for which he would search thoroughly?* Or, by which leaving it carelessly at your table he would



would make trial, whether you were honest men or no. 2. How they pleaded for themselves; they solemnly protested their innocence, and detestation of so ill a thing, *ver. 7.* urged it as an instance of their honesty, that they had brought their money back, *ver. 8.* proffered to submit to the severest punishment if they should be found guilty, *ver. 9, 10.* 3. How the theft was fastened upon Benjamin, in his sack the cup was found, to whom Joseph had been particularly kind. Benjamin, no doubt, was ready to deny upon oath the taking of the cup, and we may suppose him as little liable to suspicion as any of them; but it is in vain to confront such notorious evidence, the cup is found in his custody; they dare not arraign Joseph's justice, nor so much as suggest that perhaps he that had put their money in their sack's mouth had put the cup there, but they throw themselves upon Joseph's mercy. And, 4. Here is their humble submission, *ver. 16.* (1.) They acknowledge the righteousness of God: *God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants*; perhaps referring to the injury they had formerly done to Joseph, for which they thought God was now reckoning with them. Note, Even in those afflictions wherein we apprehend ourselves wronged by men, yet we must own that God is righteous, and finds out our iniquity. (2.) They surrender themselves prisoners to Joseph, we are my lord's servants. Now Joseph's dreams were accomplished to the utmost; their bowing so oft, and doing obeisance, might be looked upon but as compliment, and no more but what other strangers did; but the construction they themselves in their pride had put upon his dreams was, *shalt thou have dominion over us?* *chap. xxxvii. 8.* and in that sense it is now at length fulfilled, they own themselves his vassals: since they did invidiously so understand it, so it shall be fulfilled in them. 5. Joseph with an air of justice gives sentence, that Benjamin only should be kept in bondage, and the rest should be dismissed, for why should any suffer but the guilty? Perhaps Joseph intended hereby to try Benjamin's temper, whether he could bear such a hardship as this with the calmness and composedness of mind that became a wise and good man; in short, whether he were indeed his own brother in spirit as well as blood, for Joseph himself had been falsely accused and suffered hard things by it, and yet kept possession of his own soul: However, it is plain he intended hereby to try the affection of his brethren to him, and to their father. If they had gone away contentedly and left Benjamin in bonds, no doubt but Joseph would soon have preferred him, and sent notice to Jacob, and would have left the rest of his brethren justly to suffer for their hard heartedness; but they proved to be better affected to Benjamin than he feared. Note, We cannot judge what men are, by what they have been formerly, nor what they will do, by what they have done: age and experience may make men wiser and better. They that had sold Joseph, yet would not now abandon Benjamin: The worst may mend in time.

18. Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. 19. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? 20. And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone left of his mother, and his father loveth him. 21. And thou saidst unto thy servants, bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. 22. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. 23. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, you shall see my face no more. 24. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. 25. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. 26. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. 27. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons. 28. And the one went out from me, and I said surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. 29. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. 30. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life.) 31. It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servant shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. 33. Now

therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad, a bond-man to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. 34. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

We have here a most ingenious and pathetic speech which Judah made to Joseph on Benjamin's behalf, to obtain his discharge from the sentence passed upon him; either Judah was a better friend to Benjamin than the rest were, and more solicitous to bring him off; or, he thought himself under greater obligations to endeavour it than the rest, because he had passed his word to his father for his safe return; or the rest chose him for their spokesman, because he was a man of better sense, and better spirit, and had a greater command of language than any of them. His address, as it is here recorded, is so very natural, and so expressive of his present passion, that we cannot but suppose Moses, who wrote it so long after, to have written it under the special direction of him that made man's mouth. A great deal of unaffected art, and unstudied unforced Rhetoric there is in this speech.

1. He addressed himself to Joseph with a great deal of respect and deference, calls him his lord, himself and his brethren his servants, begs his patient hearing, and passeth a mighty compliment upon him, thou art even as Pharaoh, whose favour we desire, and whose wrath we dread as we do Pharaoh's. Religion doth not destroy good manners, and it is prudence to speak those fair at whose mercy we lie: Titles of honour to those that are entitled to them, are not flattering titles.

2. He represented Benjamin as one well worthy of his compassionate consideration, *ver. 20.* he was a little one, compared with the rest of them; the youngest, not acquainted with the world, nor ever enured to hardship, having been always brought up tenderly with his father. It made the case the more pitious, that he alone was left of his mother, and his brother was dead, *viz. Joseph*; little did Judah think what a tender point he touched upon now. Judah knew that Joseph was sold, and therefore had reason enough to think that he was alive; however he could not be sure that he was dead, but had made their father believe he was dead, and now they had told that lie so long, that they had forgot the truth, and begun to believe it themselves.

3. He urged it very closely by that Joseph had himself constrained them to bring Benjamin with them, had expressed a desire to see him, *ver. 21.* had forbidden them his presence, unless they brought Benjamin with them, *ver. 23, 26.* all which intimated, that he designed him some kindness, and must be brought with so much difficulty to the preferment of a perpetual slavery: Was he not brought to Egypt in obedience, purely in obedience to the command of Joseph, and would not he shew him some mercy? Some observe, that Jacob's sons in reasoning with their father had said, *We will not go down unless Benjamin go with us*, *chap. xliii. 5.* but when Judah comes here to relate the story, he expresseth it more decently, *We cannot go down*, with any expectation to speed well. Indecent words spoke in haste to our superiors, should be recalled and amended.

4. The great argument he insists upon was the insupportable grief it would be to his aged father, if Benjamin should be left behind in servitude: His father loves him, *ver. 20.* This they had pleaded against Joseph's insisting on his coming down, *ver. 22.* *if he should leave his father, his father would die*, much more if now he be left behind never more to return to him. This the old man of whom they spake, had pleaded against his going down, *ver. 29.* *if mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs*, that crown of glory, *with sorrow to the grave.* This therefore Judah presseth with a great deal of earnestness, *his life is bound up in the lad's life*, *ver. 30.* when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will faint away, and die immediately, *ver. 31.* or will abandon himself, to such a degree of sorrow, as will in a few days make an end of him. And, (lastly) Judah pleads, that for his part he could not bear to see this, *ver. 34.* *Let me not see the evil that shall come on my father.* Note, It is the duty of children to be very tender of their parents comfort, and to be afraid of every thing that may be an occasion of grief to them. Thus the love that descended first must again ascend, and something must be done towards a recompence for their care.

5. Judah, in honour to the justice of Joseph's sentence, and to shew his sincerity in this plea, offers himself to become a bond-man instead of Benjamin, *ver. 33.* Thus the law would be satisfied, Joseph would be no loser, for we may suppose Judah a more able bodied man than Benjamin, and fitter for service, Jacob would better bear that than the loss of Benjamin. Now so far was he from grieving at his father's particular fondness for Benjamin, that he is himself willing to be a bond-man to indulge it.

Now, had Joseph been as Judah supposed him, an utter stranger to the family, yet even common humanity could not but be wrought upon by such powerful reasonings as these, for nothing could be said more moving, more tender; it was enough to melt a heart of stone: But to Joseph who was nearer a kin to Benjamin than Judah himself was, and who at this time, felt a greater passion both for him and his aged father, than Judah did, nothing could



could be more pleasingly, nor more happily said. Neither Jacob nor Benjamin needed an intercessor with Joseph, for he himself loved them.

Upon the whole matter let us take notice, 1. How prudently Judah suppressed all mention of the crime that was charged upon Benjamin. Had he said any thing by way of acknowledgement of it, he had reflected on Benjamin's honesty, and seemed too forward to suspect that: Had he said any thing by way of denial of it, he had reflected on Joseph's justice; and the sentence he had passed, therefore he wholly waves that head, and appeals to Joseph's pity; compare with this that of Job, in humbling himself before God, *Job ix. 15. Though I were righteous yet would I not answer, I would not argue but petition, I would make supplication to my judge.* 2. What good reason dying Jacob had to say, *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise,* chap. xlix. 8. for he excelled them all in boldness, wisdom, eloquence, and especially tenderness for their father and family. 3. Judah's faithful adherence to Benjamin now in his distress, was recompensed long after by the constant adherence of the tribe of Benjamin, to the tribe of Judah, when all the other ten tribes deserted it. 4. How fitly doth the apostle, when he is discoursing of the mediation of Christ, observe, *That our Lord sprang out of Judah,* Heb. vii. 14. for like his father Judah, he not only made intercession for the transgressors, but he became a surety for them, as it follows there, *ver. 22. testifying therein a very tender concern both for his father and for his brethren.*

## C H A P. XLV.

*It is pity this chapter and that foregoing should be parted, and read asunder. There we had Judah's intercession for Benjamin, with which we may suppose the rest of his brethren signified their concurrence; Joseph let him go on, without interruption, heard all he had to say, and then answered it all in one word, I am Joseph. Now he found his brethren humbled for their sins, mindful of himself, (for Judah had mentioned him twice in his speech) respectful to their father, and very tender of their brother Benjamin; now they were ripe for the comfort he designed them, by making himself known to them, which we have the story of in this chapter: It was to Joseph's brethren as clear shining after rain, nay, it was to them as life from the dead. Here is 1. Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren, and his discourse with them upon that occasion, ver. 1—15. 2. The orders Pharaoh hereupon gave to fetch Jacob and his family down to Egypt, and Joseph's dispatch of his brethren accordingly back to his father with these orders, ver. 16—24. 3. The joyful tidings of this brought to Jacob, ver. 25—28.*

1. **T**HEN Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; Doth my father yet live? and his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5. Now therefore be not grieved nor angry with your selves that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve life. 6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. 7. And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. 9. Hasten you and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not. 10. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy childrens children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast. 11. And there will I nourish thee, (for yet there are five years of famine;) lest thou and thy household, and all that thou hast come to poverty. 12. And behold, your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. 13. And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and ye shall hasten, and bring down my father hither. 14. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his

neck. 15. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

Judah and his brethren were waiting for an answer, and could not but be amazed to discover, instead of the gravity of a judge, the natural affection of a father, or brother.

1. Joseph ordered all his attendants to withdraw, *ver. 1.* The private conversations of friends are the most free: when Joseph would put on love, he puts off state, which it was not fit his servants should be witnesses of. Thus Christ graciously manifests himself and his loving kindness to his people out of the sight and hearing of the world.

2. Tears were the preface or introduction to his discourse, *ver. 2.* He had dammed up this stream a great while, and with much ado, but now it swelled so high, that he could no longer contain, but he wept aloud, so that those whom had he forbid to see him, could not but hear him. These were tears of tenderness, and strong affection, and with these he threw off that austerity with which he had hitherto carried himself towards his brethren; for he could bear it no longer. This represents the divine compassion towards returning penitents, as much as that of the father of the prodigal, *Luke xv. 20. Hos. xi. 8, 9.*

3. He very abruptly (as one uneasy till it was out) tells them who he was, *I am Joseph*: They knew him only by his Egyptian name, Zaphnath-paaneah, his Hebrew name being lost and forgot in Egypt, but now he teaches them to call him by that, *I am Joseph*; nay, that they might not suspect it was another of the same name, he explains himself, *ver. 4. I am Joseph your brother.* This would both humble them, yet more for their sin in selling him, and would encourage them to hope for kind treatment. Thus when Christ would convince Paul he said, *I am Jesus*, and when he would comfort his disciples, he said, *It is I, be not afraid.* This word at first startled Joseph's brethren, they started back through fear, or at least stood still astonished, but Joseph called kindly and familiarly to them, *Come near, I pray you.* Thus when Christ manifests himself to his people, he encourages them to draw near to him, with a true heart. Perhaps being about to speak of their selling of him, he would not speak aloud lest the Egyptians should over hear, and it should make the Hebrews to be yet more an abomination to them, therefore he would have them come near that he might whisper with them, which, now the tide of his passion was a little over, he was able to do; whereas at first he could not but cry out.

4. He endeavours to sweeten their grief for the injuries they had done him, by shewing them that whatever they designed God meant it for good, and had brought much good out of it, *ver. 5. Be not grieved, or angry with your selves*: Sinners must grieve and be angry with themselves for their sins, yea, tho' God, by his power, bring good out of them, for that is no thanks to the sinner, but true penitents should be greatly affected with it when they see God bringing good out of evil, *meat out of the eater.* Tho' we must not with this consideration extenuate our own sins, and so take off the edge of our repentance, yet it may do well thus to extenuate the sins of others, and so take off the edge of our angry resentments. Thus Joseph doth here: His brethren needed not to fear that he would revenge upon them an injury which God's providence had made to turn so much to his advantage, and that of his family. Now he tells them how long the famine was likely to last, five years, yet, *ver. 6.* what a capacity he was in of being kind to his relations and friends, which is the greatest satisfaction that wealth and power can give to a good man, *ver. 8.* see what a favourable colour he puts upon the injury they had done him, *God sent me before you,* *ver. 5, 7.* Note, (1.) God's Israel is the particular care of God's providence: Joseph reckoned that his advancement was not so much designed to save a whole kingdom of Egyptians, as to preserve a small family of Israelites, *for the Lord's portion is his people*; whatever goes with others they shall be secured. (2.) Providence looks a great way forward, and has a long reach; even long before the years of plenty providence was preparing for the supply of Jacob's house in the years of famine. The Psalmist praiseth God for this, *Psal. cv. 17. He sent a man before them, even Joseph.* God sees his work from the beginning to the end, but we do not, *Eccl. iii. 11.* How admirable are the projects of providence! How remote it's tendencies! What wheels are there within wheels, and yet all directed by the eyes in the wheels, and the spirit of the living creature! Let us therefore judge nothing before the time. (3.) God often works by contraries: The envy and contention of brethren threatens the ruin of families, yet that proves the occasion of preserving Jacob's family. Joseph had never been the shepherd and stone of Israel, if his brethren had not shot at him, and hated him: even those that had wickedly sold Joseph into Egypt, yet themselves reaped the benefit of the good God brought out of it; as those that put Christ to death were many of them saved by his death. (4.) God must have all the glory of the seasonable preservations of his people, by what way soever they are affected, *ver. 8. It was not you that sent me hither, but God.* As, on the one hand, they must not fret at it because it ended so well; so, on the other hand, they must not be proud of it, because it was God's doing, and not theirs. They designed by selling



selling him into Egypt to defeat his dreams, but God thereby designed to accomplish them. *Iſa. x. 7. Howbeit he meaneth not ſo.*

5. He promiſeth to take care of his father and all the family, during the reſt of the years of famine.

1. He deſires that his father might ſpeedily be made glad with the tidings of his life and honour. His brethren muſt haſten to Canaan, and muſt acquaint Jacob that his ſon Joſeph was lord of all Egypt, *ver. 9.* they muſt tell him of all his glory there, *ver. 13.* he knew it would be a reſreſhing oil to his hoary head, and a ſovereign cordial to his ſpirits. If any thing would make him young again this would. He deſires them to give themſelves, and take with them to their father, all poſſible ſatisfaction of the truth of theſe ſurprizing tidings, *ver. 12. your eyes ſee that it is my mouth.* If they would recollect themſelves they might remember ſomething of his features, ſpeech, &c. and be ſatisfied.

2. He is very earneſt that his father and all his family ſhould come to him to Egypt; *come down unto me, tarry not, ver. 9.* He allots his dwelling in Goſhen, that part of Egypt which lay towards Canaan, that they might be mindful of the country from which they were to come out, *ver. 10.* He promiſeth to provide for him, *ver. 11. I will nourish.* Note, It is the duty of children, if the neceſſity of their parents do at any time require it, to ſupport and ſupply them to the utmoſt of their ability, and Corban will never excuſe them, *Mar. vii. 11.* this is ſhewing piety at home, *1 Tim. v. 4.* Our Lord Jeſus being like Joſeph exalted to the higheſt honours and powers of the upper world, it is his will that all that are his ſhould be with him where he is, *Joh. xvii. 24.* This is his commandment that we be with him now in faith and hope, and a heavenly converſation, and this is his promiſe that we ſhall be for ever with him.

6. Endearments were interchanged between him and his brethren. He began with the youngeſt, his own brother Benjamin, who was but about a year old when he was ſeparated from his brethren; they wept on each others neck, *ver. 14.* perhaps to think of their mother Rachel, who died in travail of Benjamin. Rachel, in her husband Jacob, had been lately weeping for her children, becauſe in his apprehenſion they were not, Joſeph gone, and Benjamin going; and now they are weeping for her, becauſe ſhe was not. After he had embraced Benjamin, he, in like manner, careſſed them all, *ver. 15.* and then his brethren talked with him freely and familiarly of all the affairs of their father's houſe. After the tokens of true reconciliation follow the inſtances of a ſweet communion.

16. And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's houſe, ſaying, Joſeph's brethren are come: and it pleaſed Pharaoh well, and his ſervants. 17. And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, ſay unto thy brethren, this do ye; lade your beaſts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan, 18. And take your father, and your houſholds, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye ſhall eat the fat of the land. 19. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. 20. Alſo regard not your ſtuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. 21. And the children of Iſrael did ſo; and Joſeph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. 22. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment: but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of ſilver, and five changes of raiment. 23. And to his father he ſent after this manner; ten aſſes laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten ſhe-aſſes laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. 24. So he ſent his brethren away, and they departed: and he ſaid unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

Here is, 1. The kindneſs of Pharaoh to Joſeph, and to his relations for his ſake; he bid his brethren welcome, *ver. 16.* though it was a time of ſcarcity, and they were likely to be a charge to him. Nay, becauſe it pleaſed Pharaoh, it pleaſed his ſervants too, at leaſt they pretended to be pleaſed becauſe Pharaoh was. He engaged Joſeph to ſend for his father down to Egypt, and promiſed to furniſh them with all conveniences both for his removal thither, and his ſettlement there. If the good of all the land of Egypt (as it was now better ſtocked than any other land, thanks to Joſeph, under God) would ſuffice him, he was welcome to it all, it was all his own, even the fat of the land, *ver. 18.* ſo that they need not regard their ſtuff, *ver. 20.* What they had in Canaan he reckoned but ſtuff in compariſon with what he had for them in Egypt, and therefore if they ſhould be conſtrained to

leave ſome of that behind them, let them not be diſcontented, Egypt would afford them enough to make up the loſſes of their remove. Thus thoſe for whom Chriſt intends ſhares in his heavenly glory ought not to regard the ſtuff of this world: the beſt of it's enjoyments are but ſtuff, but lumber; we cannot make ſure of it while we are here, much leſs can we carry it away with us, let us not therefore be ſollicitous about it, nor ſet our eyes or hearts upon it, there are better things reſerved for us in that bleſſed land whither our Joſeph is gone to prepare a place.

2. The kindneſs of Joſeph to his father and brethren: Pharaoh was reſpectful to Joſeph in gratitude, becauſe he had been an inſtrument of much good to him and his kingdom, not only preſerving it from the common calamity, but helping to make it conſiderable among the nations, for all their neighbours would ſay, ſurely the Egyptians are a wiſe and underſtanding people that are ſo well ſtocked in a time of ſcarcity: for this reaſon Pharaoh never thought any thing too much he could do for Joſeph. Note, There is a gratitude owing even to inferiors: and when any have ſhewed us kindneſs we ſhould ſtudy to requite it, not only to them but to their relations. And Joſeph likewiſe was reſpectful to his father and brethren in duty, becauſe they were his near relations, though his brethren had been his enemies, and his father long a ſtranger. 1. He furniſhed them for neceſſity, *ver. 21.* He gave them wagons and provisions for the way, both going and coming, for we never find that Jacob was very rich, and at this time when the famine prevailed, we may ſuppoſe he was rather poor. 2. He furniſhed them for ornament and delight. To his brethren he gave two ſuits a-piece of good clothes, to Benjamin five ſuits, and money beſides in his pocket, *ver. 22.* And to his father he ſent a very handſome preſent of the varieties of Egypt, *ver. 23.* Note, Thoſe that are wealthy ſhould be generous, and deviſe liberal things; what is an abundance good for, but to do good with it? 3. He diſmiſſed them with a ſeaſonable caution, *ver. 24. ſee that ye fall not out by the way.* He knew they were but too apt to be quarrellſom, and what had lately paſſed which revived the remembrance of what they had done formerly againſt their brother, might give them occaſion to quarrel: Joſeph had obſerved them to conteſt about it, chap. xlii. 22. To one they would ſay it was you that firſt upbraided him with his dreams; to another, it was you that ſaid, let us kill him; to another, it was you that ſtrippt him of his fine coat; to another, it was you that threw him into the pit, &c. Now Joſeph having forgiven them all, lays this obligation upon them, not to upbraid one another. This charge our Lord Jeſus has given to us, that we love one another, that we live in peace, that whatever occurs, or whatever former occurrences are remembered, we fall not out. For, 1. We are brethren, we have all one father. 2. We are his brethren, and we ſhame our relation to him who is our peace, if we fall out. 3. We are all guilty, verily guilty, and inſtead of quarrelling with one another, have a great deal of reaſon to fall out with ourſelves. 4. We are, or hope to be, forgiven of God, whom we have all offended, and therefore ſhould be ready to forgive one another. 5. We are, by the way, a way that lies through the land of Egypt, where we have many eyes upon us, that ſeek occaſion and advantage againſt us: A way that leads to Canaan, where we hope to be for ever in perfect peace.

25. And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, 26. And told him, ſaying, Joſeph is yet alive, and he is governour over all the land of Egypt. And Jacobs heart fainteſt, for ſo he believed them not. 27. And they told him all the words of Joſeph, which he had ſaid unto them; and when he ſaw the wagons which Joſeph had ſent to carry him, the ſpirit of Jacob their father revived. 28. And Iſrael ſaid, It is enough; Joſeph my ſon is yet alive: I will go and ſee him before I die.

We have here the good news brought to Jacob.

1. The relation of it at firſt ſunk his ſpirits; when without any preamble his ſons came in crying, *Joſeph is yet alive*, each ſtriving which ſhould firſt proclaim it, perhaps he thought they bantered him, and the affront grieved him; or, the very mention of Joſeph's name revived his ſorrow, ſo that his heart fainteſt, *ver. 26.* it was a good while before he came to himſelf. He was in ſuch care and fear about the reſt of them, that at this time it would have been joy enough to him to hear that Simeon is releaſed, and Benjamin is come ſafe home; for he had been ready to deſpair concerning both theſe; but to hear that Joſeph is alive is too good news to be true, he faints for he believes it not. Note, We faint becauſe we do not believe; David himſelf had fainteſt if he had not believed, *Pſal. xxvii. 13.*

2. The confirmation of it by degrees revived his ſpirit; Jacob had eaſily believed his ſons formerly when they told him Joſeph is dead, but he can hardly believe them now they tell him, Joſeph



is alive. Weak and tender spirits are influenced more by fear than hope, and are more apt to receive impressions that are discouraging than encouraging. But at length Jacob is convinced of the truth of the story, especially when he sees the wagons which were sent to carry him, for seeing is believing, then his spirit revived. Death is as the wagons which are sent to fetch us to Christ, the very sight of it approaching should revive us. Now Jacob is called Israel, *ver.* 28, for he begins to recover his wonted vigour. (1.) It pleases him to think that Joseph is alive. He faith nothing of Joseph's glory, which they had told him of, it was enough to him that Joseph was alive. Note, Those that would be content with lesser degrees of comfort are best prepared for greater. (2.) It pleases him to think of going to see him. Though he was old, and the journey long, yet he would go see Joseph, because Joseph's business would not permit him to come to see him. Observe he will go see him, not I will go live with him; Jacob was old, and did not expect to live long, but I will go see him before I die, and then let me depart in peace; let my eyes be refreshed with this sight before they are closed, and then it is enough, I need no more to make me happy in this world. Note, It is good for us all to make death familiar to us, and to speak of it as near, that we may think how little we have to do before we die, that we may do it with all our might, and may enjoy our comforts as those that must quickly die and leave them.

## C H A P. XLVI.

*Jacob is here removing to Egypt, in his old age, forced thither by a famine, and invited thither by a son. Here, 1. God sends him thither, ver. 1—4. 2. All his family goes with him thither, ver. 5,—27. 3. Joseph bids him welcome thither, ver. 28—34.*

1. **A**ND Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. 2. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob: And he said, here am I. 3. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. 4. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

The divine precept is, *In all thy ways acknowledge God*; and the promise annexed to it is, *He shall direct thy paths*. Jacob has here a very great concern before him, not only a journey, but a remove, to settle in another country; a change which was very surprizing to him, for he never had any other thoughts but to live and die in Canaan, and which would be of great consequence to his family, for a long time to come: now here we are told,

1. How he acknowledged God in this way. He came to Beer-sheba, from Hebron, where he now dwelt, and there he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac, *ver.* 1. He chose that place in remembrance of the communion which his father and grandfather had with God in that place. Abraham called on God there, *Gen.* xxi. 33. so did Isaac, *Gen.* xxvi. 35. and therefore Jacob made it the place of his devotion, the rather because it lay in his way. In his devotion, (1.) He had an eye to God, as the God of his father Isaac, *i. e.* a God in covenant with him, for by Isaac the covenant was entailed upon him. God had forbidden Isaac to go down to Egypt when there was a famine in Canaan, *Gen.* xxvi. 2. which perhaps Jacob calls to mind, when he consults God as the God of his father Isaac, with this thought, Lord, though I am very desirous to see Joseph, yet if thou forbid me to go down to Egypt as thou didst my father Isaac, I will submit, and very contentedly stay where I am. (2.) He offered sacrifices, extraordinary sacrifices, besides those at his stated times: these sacrifices were offered, 1. By way of thanksgiving for the late blessed change of the face of his family, for the good news he had received concerning Joseph, and the hopes he had of seeing him. Note, We should give God thanks for the beginnings of mercy, though they are not yet perfected, and this is a decent way of begging further mercy. 2. By way of petition for the presence of God with him in his intended journey: he desired by these sacrifices to make his peace with God, to obtain the forgiveness of sin, that he might take no guilt along with him in this journey, for that is an ill companion. By Christ, the great sacrifice, we must reconcile ourselves to God, and offer up our requests to him. 3. By way of consultation: the Heathen consulted their oracles by sacrifice. Jacob would not go till he had asked God's leave; shall I go down to Egypt, or back to Hebron? Such must be our enquiries in doubtful cases, and though we cannot expect immediate answers from heaven, yet if we diligently attend to the directions of the word, conscience and providence, we shall find it is not in vain to ask counsel of God.

2. How God did direct his paths. *In the visions of the night* (probably the very next night after he had offered his sacrifices as *2 Chron.* i. 7.) *God spake unto him, ver. 2.* Note, Those who

desire to keep up communion with God shall find that it never fails on his side. If we speak to him as we ought, he will not fail to speak to us. God called him by name, by his old name, Jacob, Jacob, to mind him of his low estate; his present fears did scarce become an Israel: Jacob, like one well acquainted with the visions of the Almighty, and ready to obey them, answers, Here am I, ready to receive orders: and what has God to say to him?

1. He renews the covenant with him; *I am God, the God of thy father, ver. 3, i. e.* I am what thou ownest me to be: thou shalt find me a God, a divine wisdom and power engaged for thee; and thou shalt find me the God of thy father, true to the covenant made with him.

2. He encourages him to make this remove of his family; *fear not to go down into Egypt*. It seems though Jacob upon the first intelligence of Joseph's life and glory in Egypt, resolved without any hesitation, *I will go and see him*, yet upon second thoughts he saw some difficulties in it, which he knew not well how to get over. Note, Even those changes that seem to have in them the greatest joys and hopes, yet have an alloy of cares and fears, *nulla est sincera voluptas*; we must always rejoice with trembling. Jacob had many careful thoughts about this journey, which God took notice of. 1. He was old, 130 years old; and it is mentioned as one of the infirmities of old people, that they are afraid of that which is high, and fears are in the way, *Eccl.* xii. 5. It was a long journey, and Jacob was unfit for travel, and perhaps remembered that his beloved Rachel died in a journey. 2. He feared lest his sons should be tainted with the idolatry of Egypt, and forget the God of their fathers, or enamoured with the pleasures of Egypt, and forget the land of promise. 3. Probably he thought of what God had said to Abraham concerning the bondage and affliction of his seed, *Gen.* xv. 13, and was apprehensive that his remove to Egypt would issue in that. Present satisfactions should not take us off from the consideration and prospect of future inconveniences, which possibly may arise from that which now appears most promising. 4. He could not think of laying his bones in Egypt. But, whatever his discouragements were, this was enough to answer them all, *Fear not to go down into Egypt*.

3. He promises him comfort in the remove. (1.) That he should multiply in Egypt; *I will there, where thou fearest that thy family will sink and be lost, make it a great nation*. That is the place Infinite Wisdom has chosen for the accomplishment of that promise. (2.) That he should have God's presence with him, *I will go down with thee into Egypt*. Note, Those that go where God sends them, shall certainly have God with them, and that is enough to secure them wherever they are, and to silence their fears; we may safely venture even into Egypt if God go down with us. 3. That neither he nor his should be lost in Egypt, *I will surely bring thee up again*: Though Jacob died in Egypt, yet this promise was fulfilled, (1.) In the bringing up of his body to be buried in Canaan, about which it appears, he was very solicitous. (2.) In the bringing up of his seed to be settled in Canaan. Whatever low or darksome valley we are called into at any time, we may be confident if God go down with us into it, he will surely bring us up again. If he go with us down to death, he will surely bring us up again to glory. 4. That living and dying his beloved Joseph should be a comfort to him, *Joseph should put his hand upon thine eyes*. This is a promise that Joseph should live as long as he lived, that he should be with him at his death, and close his eyes with all possible tenderness and respect, as the dearest relations used to do. Probably Jacob, in the multitude of his thoughts within him, had been wishing that Joseph might do this last office of love for him; (*Ille meos oculos comprimat*) and God thus answered him in the letter of his desire. Thus God sometimes gratifies the innocent wishes of his people, and makes not only their death happy, but the very circumstances of it agreeable.

5. And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6. And they took their cattle and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him. 7. His sons, and his sons sons with him, his daughters, and his sons daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt. 8. And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacobs first-born. 9. And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. 10. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. 11. And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12. And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died



died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez, were Hezron and Hamul. 13. And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. 14. And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. 15. These be sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters, were thirty and three. 16. And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggai, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. 17. And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: And the sons of Beriah; Hebar, and Malchiel. 18. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter: and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls. 19. The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. 20. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On bare unto him. 21. And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gerah, and Naman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. 22. These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. 23. And the sons of Dan; Hushim. 24. And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. 25. These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. 26. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacobs sons wives, all the souls were threescore and six; 27. And the sons of Joseph which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.

Old Jacob is here sitting; little did he think of ever leaving Canaan: He expected, no doubt, to die in his nest, and to leave his seed in actual possession of the promised land: but providence orders it otherwise. Note, Those that think themselves well settled may yet be unsettled in a little time; even old people, who think of no other remove but that to the grave, which Jacob had much upon his heart, (*chap. xxxvii. 35.—xlii. 38.*) sometimes live to see great changes in their family. It is good to be ready, not only for the grave, but for whatever may happen betwixt and the grave.

Observe, 1. How Jacob was conveyed; not in a chariot, tho' chariots were then used, but in a wagon, *ver. 5.* Jacob had the character of a plain man, who did not affect any thing stately or magnificent: his son rode in a chariot, *chap. xli. 43.* but a wagon would serve him.

2. The removal of what he had with him, (1.) His effects, *ver. 6, cattle and goods*; these he took with him that he might not wholly be beholden to Pharaoh for a livelihood, and that it might not afterwards be said of them, that they came beggars to Egypt. (2.) His family, *all his seed*, *ver. 7.* It is probable they continued to live together in common with their father, and therefore when he went they all went; which perhaps they were the more willing to do, because though they had heard that the land of Canaan was promised them, yet to this day they had none of it in possession: We have here a particular account of the names of Jacob's family; his sons sons, most of which are afterwards mentioned, as heads of houses, in the several tribes: See *Numb. xxvi. 5, &c.* Bishop Patrick observes, that Issachar called his eldest son Tola, which signifies a worm, probably because when he was born he was a very little weak child, a worm, and no man, not likely to live, and yet there sprang from him a very numerous offspring, *1 Chron. vii. 2.* Note, Living and dying do not go by probability. The whole number that went down into Egypt were sixty-six, *ver. 26.* to which add Joseph and his two sons, who were there before, and Jacob himself, the head of the family, and you have the number of seventy, *ver. 27.* The Septuagint make them seventy-five, and Stephen follows them, *Acts vii. 14.* The reason of which we leave to the conjecture of the critics: but let us observe, 1. That masters of families ought to take care of all under their charge, and to provide for those of their own house, food convenient both for body and soul; when Jacob himself removed to a land of plenty he would not leave any of his children behind him to starve, in a barren land. 2. Though the accomplishment of promises is always sure, yet it is often slow. It was now 215 years since God had promised Abraham to make of him a great nation, *chap. xii. 2.* and yet that branch of his seed, on which the promise was entailed, was as yet increased but to seventy, of which this particular account is kept, that the power of God in multiplying these seventy to so vast a multitude, even in Egypt, may be the more illustrious; when he pleases *a little one shall become a thousand*, *Isa. lx. 22.*

28. And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. 29. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen; and presented himself unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. 30. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. 31. And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me: 32. And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have. 33. And it shall come to pass when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? 34. That ye shall say, Thy servants trade hath been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

(1.) We have here the joyful meeting between Jacob and his son Joseph; in which observe, Jacob's prudence in sending Judah before him to Joseph, to give him notice of his arrival in Goshen. This was a piece of respect owing to the government, under the protection of which these strangers were come to put themselves, *ver. 28.* We should be very careful not to give offence to any, especially not to the higher powers. 2. Joseph's filial respect to him. He went in his chariot to meet him, and in the interview shewed, (1.) How much he honoured him. *He presented himself unto him.* Note, It is the duty of children to reverence their parents, yea, though providence as to outward condition hath advanced them above their parents. (2.) How much he loved him; time did not wear out the sense of his obligations, but his tears which he shed abundantly upon his father's neck for joy to see him, were real indications of the sincere and strong affection he had for him. See how near sorrow and joy are to each other in this world, when tears serve for the expressions of both: In the other world weeping will be restrained to sorrow only, in Heaven there is perfect joy, but no tears of joy; all tears, even those that shall there be wiped away, because the joys there are, as no joys here are, without any alloy. It was observed when Joseph embraced Benjamin, that he *wept upon his neck*, but when he embraced his father, he *wept upon his neck a good while*; his brother Benjamin was dear, but his father Jacob must be dearer. 3. Jacob's great satisfaction in this meeting, *ver. 30, Now let me die.* Not but that it was further desirable to live with Joseph, and to see his honour and usefulness, but he had so much pleasure and satisfaction in this first meeting, that he thought it too much to desire or expect any more in this world, where our comforts must always be imperfect. Jacob wished to die now presently, and yet lived 17 years longer, which, as our lives go now, is a considerable part of a man's age. Note, Death will not always come just when we call for it whether in a passion of sorrow, or in a passion of joy. Our times are in God's hand, and not in our own; we must die just when God pleases, and not either just when we are surfeited with the pleasures of life, or just when we are overwhelmed with it's griefs.

(2.) We have here Joseph's prudent care concerning his brethren's settlement. It was justice to Pharaoh to let him know that such a colony was come to settle in his dominions. Note, if others repose a confidence in us, we must not be so base and disingenuous as to abuse it by imposing upon them. If Jacob and his family should come to be a charge to the Egyptians, yet it shall never be said that they came among them clandestinely and by stealth. Thus Joseph took care to pay his respects to Pharaoh, *ver. 31.* But how shall he dispose of his brethren? Time was when they were contriving to be rid of him, now he is contriving to settle them to their satisfaction and advantage; this is rendering good for evil. Now, 1. He would have them to live by themselves, separate as much as might be from the Egyptians, *in the land of Goshen*, which lay nearest to Canaan, and which perhaps was more thinly peopled by the Egyptians, and well furnished with pastures for cattle. He desired they might live separately, that they might be in the less danger both of being infected by the vices of the Egyptians, and of being insulted by the malice of the Egyptians. Shepherds it seems were an abomination to the Egyptians, *i. e.* they looked upon them with contempt, and scorned to converse with them, and he would not send for his brethren to Egypt to be trampled upon. And yet, 2. He would have them to continue shepherds, and not to be ashamed to own that as their occupation before Pharaoh. He could have employed them under himself in the corn trade, or perhaps, by his interest in the king, might have procured places for them at court or in the army, and some of them at least were deserving enough; but



but such preferments would have exposed them to the envy of the Egyptians, and would have tempted them to forget Canaan, and the promise made unto their fathers, therefore he contrives to continue them in their old employment. Note, 1. An honest calling is no disparagement, nor ought we to account it so either in ourselves, or in our relations, but rather reckon it a shame to be idle, or to have nothing to do. 2. It is generally best for people to abide in the callings that they have been bred to, and used to, 1 Cor. vii. 24. What employment and condition God in his providence hath allotted for us, let us accommodate ourselves to it, and satisfy ourselves with it, and not mind high things. It is better be the credit of a mean post than the shame of a high one.

## C H A P. XLVII.

In this chapter we have instances, 1. Of Joseph's kindness and affection to his relations, presenting his brethren first, and then his father to Pharaoh, ver. 1—10. settling them in Goshen, and providing for them there, ver. 11—12. paying his respects to his father when he sent for him, ver. 27—31. 2. Of Joseph's justice between prince and people in a very critical affair; selling Pharaoh's corn to his subjects with reasonable profit to Pharaoh, and yet without any wrong to them, ver. 13—26. Thus he approved himself wise and good, both in his private and in his public capacity.

1. **T**HEN Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen. 2. And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. 3. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers. 4. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come: for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. 5. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: 6. The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any man of activity amongst them, then make them rulers over my cattle. 7. And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. 8. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? 9. And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. 10. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. 11. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. 12. And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his fathers household with bread, according to their families.

Here is, 1. The respect Joseph as a subject shewed to his prince. Though he was his favourite, and prime minister of state, and had had particular orders from him to send for his father down to Egypt, yet he would not suffer him to settle till he had given notice of it to Pharaoh, ver. 1. Christ, our Joseph, disposeth of his followers in his kingdom as it is prepared of his Father, saying, *it is not mine to give*, Matth. xx. 23.

2. The respect Joseph, as a brother, shewed to his brethren, notwithstanding all the unkindnesses he had formerly received from them. 1. Though he was a great man, and they were comparatively mean and despicable, especially in Egypt, yet he owned them. Let those that are rich and great in the world, learn hence not to overlook or despise their poor relations. Every branch of the tree is not a top-branch, but because it is a lower branch it is therefore not of the tree? Our Lord Jesus, like Joseph here, is not ashamed to call us brethren. 2. They being strangers and no courtiers, he introduced some of them to Pharaoh, to kiss his hand, as we say, intending thereby to put an honour upon them among the Egyptians. Thus Christ presents his brethren in the court of Heaven, and improves his interest for them, though in themselves unworthy, and an abomination to the Egyptians. Being presented to Pharaoh, according to the instructions which Joseph had given them, they tell him,

(1.) What was their business. That they were shepherds, ver. 3. Pharaoh asked them (and Joseph knew it would be one of his first questions, chap. xvi. 33.) *What is your occupation?* He takes it for granted they had something to do, else Egypt should be no place for them, no harbour for idle vagrants: If they would not work they should not eat of his bread in this time of scarcity. Note, 1. All that have a place in the world should have an employment in it according to their capacity, some occupation or other, mental or manual. Those that need not work for their bread yet must have something to do to keep them from idleness. 2. Magistrates should enquire into the occupation of their subjects, as those that have the care of the publick welfare, for idle people are as drones in the hive, unprofitable burthens of the common-wealth.

(2.) What was their business in Egypt, to sojourn in the land, ver. 4. not to settle there for ever, only to sojourn there for a time, while the famine prevailed so in Canaan, which lay high, that it was not habitable for shepherds, the grass being burnt up much more than in Egypt, which lay low, and where the corn chiefly failed, but there was tolerable good pasture. 3. He obtained for them a grant of a settlement in the land of Goshen, ver. 5, 6. This was an instance of Pharaoh's gratitude to Joseph: because he had been such a blessing to him and his kingdom, he would be kind to his relations purely for his sake. He offered them preferment as shepherds, over his cattle, provided they were men of activity, for it is the man who is diligent in his business that shall stand before kings. And whatever our profession or employment is, we should aim to be excellent in it, and to approve ourselves ingenious and industrious.

3. The respect Joseph as a son shewed to his father.

1. He presented him to Pharaoh, ver. 7. And here, (1.) Pharaoh asks Jacob a common question, *How old art thou?* ver. 8. a question usually put to old men, for it is natural to us to admire old age, and to reverence it, Lev. xix. 33, as it is very unnatural and unbecoming to despise it, Isa. iii. 5. Jacob's countenance no doubt shewed him to be very old, for he had been a man of labour and sorrow: in Egypt people were not so long-lived as in Canaan, and therefore Pharaoh looks upon Jacob with wonder; he was as a shew in his court. When we are reflecting upon ourselves this should come into the account, *How old we are?* (2.) Jacob gives Pharaoh an uncommon answer, ver. 9. Where he speaks as became a patriarch, with an air of seriousness, for the instruction of Pharaoh. Though our speech be not always of grace, yet it must thus be always with grace. Observe here, 1. He calls his life a pilgrimage, looking upon himself as a stranger in this world, and a traveller towards another world: this earth his inn, not his home. To this the apostle refers, Heb. xi. 13. *they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims*. He reckoned himself not only a pilgrim now he was in Egypt, a strange country in which he never was before, but his life even in the land of his nativity was a pilgrimage, and those who so reckon it can the better bear the inconveniences of banishment from their native soil; they are but pilgrims still, and so they were always. 2. He reckons his life by days; for even so it is soon reckoned, and we are not sure of the continuance of it for a day to an end, but may be turned out of this tabernacle at less than an hour's warning. Let us therefore number our days, Ps. xl. 12. and measure them, Ps. xxxix. 4. 3. The character he gives of them was, (1.) That they were few. Though he had now lived one hundred and thirty years, they seemed to him but as a few days, in comparison with the days of eternity, the eternal God, and the eternal state, in which a thousand years (longer than ever any man lived) are but as one day. (2.) That they were evil; this is true concerning man in general, Job xiv. 1. *he is of few days and full of trouble*, and being evil it is well they are few; Jacob's life particularly had been made up of evil days; the pleasantest days of his life were yet before him. (3.) That they were short of the days of his fathers; not so many, not so pleasant, as their days. Old age came sooner upon him than it had done upon some of his ancestors. Let not the old man be proud of his age, and the crown of his hoary hairs, though others justly reverence it, no more than the young man of his strength or beauty, for those who are accounted very old attain not to the years of the patriarchs. The hoary head is then only a crown of glory, when it is found in the way of righteousness. (3.) Jacob both addresseth himself to Pharaoh, and takes leave of him with a blessing, ver. 7. Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and again, ver. 10. which was not only an act of civility, he payed him respect, and returned him thanks for his kindness. But an act of piety, he prayed for him, as one having the authority of a prophet and a patriarch. Though in worldly wealth Pharaoh was the greater, yet in interest with God, Jacob was the greater; he was God's anointed, Ps. cv. 13. And a patriarch's blessing was not a thing to be despised, no not by a potent prince. Darius valued the prayers of the church for himself and for his sons, Ezr. vi. 10. Pharaoh kindly received Jacob, and whether in the name of a prophet or no, thus he had a prophet's reward, which sufficiently recompensed him not only for his courteous converse with him, but for all the other kindnesses he shewed to him and his.



2. He provided well for him and his; placed him in Goshen, *ver.* 11. nourished him and all his with food convenient for them, *ver.* 12. This speaks not only Joseph a good man, who took this tender care of his poor relations, but God a good God, who raised him up for this purpose, and put him into a capacity of doing it, as Esther came to the kingdom for such a time as this. What God here did for Jacob, he has in effect promised to do for all his, that serve him and trust in him, *Pf.* xxxvii. 19. *in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.*

13. And there was no bread in all the land: for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. 14. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. 15. And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. 16. And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. 17. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: And Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses; and he fed them with bread, for all their cattle, for that year. 18. When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent, my lord also hath our herds of cattle: there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands. 19. Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed that we may live and not die, that the land be not desolate. 20. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. 21. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt, even to the other end thereof. 22. Only the land of the priests bought he not: for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they sold not their lands. 23. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land for Pharaoh: lo here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. 24. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that you shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. 25. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. 26. And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's.

Care being taken of Jacob and his family, the preservation of which was especially designed by providence in Joseph's advancement, now an account is given of the saving of the kingdom of Egypt too from ruin, for God is king of nations, as well as king of saints, and provided food for all flesh. Joseph now returns to the management of that great trust which Pharaoh had lodged in his hand. It would have been pleasing enough to him to have gone and lived with his father and brethren in Goshen, but his employment would not permit it. When he had seen his father, and seen him well settled, he applied himself as closely as ever to the execution of his office. Note, Even natural affection must give way to necessary business. Parents and children must be content to be absent one from another, when it is necessary on either side for the service of God, or the generation. In Joseph's transactions with the Egyptians, observe, 1. The great extremity that Egypt, and the parts adjacent were reduced to by the famine. There was no bread, and they fainted, *ver.* 13. they were ready to die, *ver.* 15, 19. (1.) See here what a dependance we have upon God's providence; if that suspend it's usual favours but for a while, we die, we perish, we all perish. All our wealth would not keep us from starving, if the rain of heaven were but withheld for two or three years. See how much we lie at God's mercy, and let us keep ourselves always in his love. (2.) See how much we sinart by our own improvidence, if all the Egyptians had done for themselves in the seven years of plenty, as Joseph did

for Pharaoh, they had not been now in these straits, but they regarded not the warning they had of the years of famine, concluding that tomorrow shall be as this day, next year as this, and much more abundant. Note, Because man knows not his time, his time of gathering when he has it, therefore his misery is great upon him when the spending time comes, *Ecc.* viii. 6, 7. (3.) See how early God put a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites, as afterwards in the plagues, *Exod.* viii. 22. — ix. 4, 26. — x. 23. Jacob and his family, though strangers, were plentifully fed on free cost, while the Egyptians were dying for want. See *Jf.* lxxv. 13. *My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry.* Happy art thou, O Israel. Whoever want, God's children shall not, *Pf.* xxxiv. 10. 2. The price they were come up to, for their supply, in this exigence. 1. They parted with all their money, which they had hoarded up, *ver.* 14. Silver and gold would not feed them, they must have corn. All the money of the kingdom was by this means brought into the exchequer. 2. When the money failed they parted with all their cattle, those for labour, as the horses and asses. And those for food as the flocks and the herds, *ver.* 17. By this it should seem, that we may better live upon bread without flesh, than upon flesh without bread. We may suppose they parted the more easily with their cattle, because they had little or no grass for them; and now Pharaoh saw in reality what he had before seen in vision, nothing but lean kine. 3. When they had sold their flocks off their land, it was easy to persuade themselves (rather than starve) to sell their land too, for what good would that do them, when they had neither corn to sow it, nor cattle to eat it, that therefore was their next bargain for corn. 4. When their land was sold, so that they had nothing to live on, they must of course sell themselves that they might live purely upon their labour, and hold their lands by the base tenure of villinage, at the courtesy of the crown. Note, Skin for skin and all that a man hath, even liberty and property (those darling twins) will he give for his life, for that is sweet. There are few, (though perhaps there are some) who would even dare to die rather than live in slavery, and dependance on an arbitrary power. And perhaps there are those who in that case could die by the sword, in a heat, that yet could not deliberately die by famine, which is much worse, *Lam.* iv. 9. Now, it was a great mercy to the Egyptians that in this distress they could have corn at any rate; if they had all died for hunger their lands, perhaps, would have escheated to the crown of course, for want of heirs, they therefore resolved to make the best of bad. 3. The method which Joseph took to accommodate the matter between prince and people, so that the prince might have his just advantage, and yet the people not be quite ruined. 1. For their lands, he needed not come to any bargain with them while the years of famine lasted, but when these were over (for God will not contend for ever, nor will he be always wroth) he came to an agreement which it seems both sides were pleased with, that the people should occupy and enjoy the lands, as he thought fit to assign them, and should have seed to sow them with out of the king's stores, to their own proper use and behoof, yielding and paying only a fifth part of the yearly profits as a chief rent to the crown. This became a standing law, *ver.* 26. And it was a very good bargain to have food for their lands, when otherwise they and theirs must have starved, and then to have their lands again upon such easy terms. Note, Those ministers of state are worthy of double honour both for wisdom and integrity, that keep the balance even between prince and people, so that liberty and property may not intrench upon prerogative, nor the prerogative bear hard upon liberty and property: in the multitude of such counsellors there is safety. If afterwards the Egyptians thought it hard to pay so great a duty to the king out of their lands, they must remember not only how just but how kind the first imposing of it was. They might thankfully pay a fifth where all was due. It is observable, how faithful Joseph was to him that appointed him: he did not put the money into his own pocket, nor entail the lands upon his own family, but converted both entirely to Pharaoh's use: and therefore we do not find that his posterity went out of Egypt any richer than the rest of their poor brethren. Those in publick trusts if they raise great estates must take heed that it be not at the expence of a good conscience, which is much more valuable.

2. For their persons, he removed them to cities, *ver.* 21. He transplanted them to shew Pharaoh's sovereign power over them, and that they might in time forget their titles to their lands, and be the easier reconciled to their new condition of servitude. The Jewish writers say, he removed them thus from their former habitations, because they reproached his brethren as strangers, to silence which reproach they were all made in effect strangers. See what changes a little time may make with a people; and how soon God can empty those from vessel to vessel who were settled upon their lees. How hard soever this seems to have been upon them, they themselves were at this time sensible of it as a very great kindness, and were thankful they were not worse used, *ver.* 25. Thou hast saved our lives. Note, There is good reason that the Saviour of our lives should be the master of our lives. Thou hast saved us, do what thou wilt us. 4. The reservation he made in favour of the priests. They were maintained on free cost, so that they needed not to sell their lands, *ver.* 22. All people will



will thus walk in the name of their God, they will be kind to those that attend the publick service of their God, and that minister to them in holy things, and we should in like manner honour our God, by esteeming his ministers highly in love for their works sake.

27. And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. 28. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. 29. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and dealy kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. 30. But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. 31. And he said, Swear unto me: And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the beds head.

Observe, 1. The comfort Jacob lived in, *ver.* 27, 28, while the Egyptians were impoverished in their own land, Jacob was replenished in a strange land. He lived seventeen years after he came into Egypt, far beyond his own expectation, seventeen years he had nourished Joseph, for so old he was when he was sold from him, (*chap.* xxxvii. 2.) and now, by way of requital, seventeen years Joseph nourished him. Observe how kindly providence ordered Jacob's affairs; that when he was old and least able to bear care and fatigue, he had least occasion for it, being well provided for by his son without his own forecast. Thus God considers the frame of his people.

2. The care Jacob died in. At last, *ver.* 29. *the time drew nigh that Israel must die.* Israel a prince with God, that had power over the angel, and prevailed, yet must yield to death. There is no remedy, he must die: It is appointed for all men, therefore for him; *and there is no discharge in that war.* Joseph supplied him with bread that he might not die by famine, but that did not secure him from dying by age or sickness. He died by degrees; his candle was not blown out, but gradually burnt down to the socket, so that he saw at some distance the time drawing nigh. Note, It is an improvable advantage to see the approach of death, before we feel it's arrests, that we may be quickened to do *what our hand finds to do with all our might*: However, it is not far from any of us. Now Jacob's care, as he saw the day approaching, was about his burial, not the pomp of it, he was no way solicitous about that, but the place of it.

1. He would be buried in Canaan, not in a humour, because Canaan was the land of his nativity, but in faith, because it was the land of promise, which he desired thus as it were to keep possession of till the time should come when his posterity should be masters of it. And because it was a type of Heaven, that better country which he that said these things declared plainly that he was in expectation of, *Heb.* xi. 14. He aimed at a good land which would be his rest and bliss *on the other side death.*

2. He would have Joseph sworn to bring him thither to be buried, *ver.* 29, 31. That Joseph being under such a solemn obligation to do it, might have that to answer to the objections which otherwise might have been made against it; and for the greater satisfaction of Jacob now in his dying minutes. Nothing will better help to make a death-bed easy, than the certain prospect of a rest in Canaan after death.

3. When this was done, Israel bowed himself upon the bed's-head, yielding himself as it were to the stroke of death, now let it come, and it shall be welcome, or worshipping God, as it is explained, *Heb.* xi. 21. giving God thanks for all his favours, and particularly for this. That Joseph was ready not only to put his hand upon his eyes to close them, but under his thigh to give him the satisfaction he desired concerning his burial. Thus they that go down to the dust should with humble thankfulness bow before God, the God of their mercies, *Psal.* xxii. 29.



## C H A P. XLVIII.

*The time drawing nigh that Israel must die, having in the former chapter given order about his burial, in this he takes leave of his grand-children by Joseph, and in the next of all his children. Thus Jacob's dying words are recorded, because he then speaks by a spirit of prophecy, Abraham's and Isaac's are not. God's gifts and graces shine forth much more in some saints than in others upon their death-beds. The spirit, like the wind, blows where it listeth. In this chapter, 1. Joseph hearing of his father's sickness, goes to visit him, and takes his two sons with him, *ver.* 1, 2. 2. Jacob solemnly adopts his two sons, and takes them for his own, *ver.* 3—7. 3. He blest them, *ver.* 8—16. 4. He explains and justifies the crossing of his hands in blessing them, *ver.* 17—20. 5. He leaves a particular legacy to Joseph, *ver.* 21, 22.*

1. **A**ND it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. 3. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the Land of Canaan, and blessed me, 4. And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee, for an everlasting possession. 5. And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6. And thy issue which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. 7. And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the same is Beth-lehem.

Here, 1. Joseph, upon notice of his father's illness goes to see him; though a man of honour and business, yet he will not fail to shew this due respect to his aged father, *ver.* 1. Visiting the sick to whom we lay under obligations, or may have opportunity of doing good, either for body or soul, is our duty. The sick bed is a proper place both for giving comfort and counsel to others, and receiving instruction ourselves. Joseph took his two sons with him, that they might receive their dying grand-father's blessing, and that what they might see in him, and hear from him, might make an abiding impression upon them. Note, (1.) It is good to acquaint young people that are coming into the world with the aged servants of God that are going out of it, whose dying testimony to the goodness of God, and the pleasantness of wisdom's ways may be a great encouragement to the rising generation. Manasseh and Ephraim (I dare say) would never forget what passed at this time. (2.) Pious parents are desirous of a blessing not only for themselves but for their children. O that they may live before God: Joseph had been above all his brethren kind to his father, and therefore had reason to expect particular favour from him.

2. Jacob upon notice of his son's visit prepared himself as well as he could to entertain him, *ver.* 2. He did what he could to rouze his spirits, and to stir up the gift that was in him; what little was left of bodily strength he put it forth to the utmost, and sat upon the bed. Note, It is very good for sick and aged people to be as lively and chearful as they can, that they may not faint in the day of adversity. Strengthen thyself, as Jacob here, and God will strengthen thee; hearten thyself, and help thyself, and God will help and hearten thee. Let the spirit sustain the infirmity.

3. In recompence to Joseph for all his respects to him, he adopted his two sons. In this charter of adoption there is, 1. A particular recital of God's promise to him, to which this had reference: *God blessed me, ver.* 3. and let that blessing be entailed upon them. God had promised him two things, a numerous issue, and Canaan for an inheritance, *ver.* 4. and Joseph's sons, pursuant hereunto, should each of them multiply into a tribe, and each of them have a distinct lot in Canaan, equal with Jacob's own sons. See how he blessed them by faith in that which God had said to him, *Heb.* xi. 21. Note, In all our prayers both for ourselves and for our children, we ought to have a particular eye to, and remembrance of, God's promises to us.



2. An exprefs reception of Joseph's fons into his family, *Thy fons are mine*, ver. 5, not only my grand-children, but as my own children. Though they were *born Egypt*, and their father then *feperated from his brethren*, which might seem to have cut them off from the heritage of the Lord, yet Jacob takes them in and owns them for vilible church-members. He explains it, ver. 16. *Let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers*, q. d. Let them not fucceed their father, in his power and grandeur here in Egypt, but let them fucceed me in the inheritance of the promife made to Abraham, which Jacob looked upon as much more valuable and honourable, and would have them to prize and covet it accordingly. Thus the aged dying patriarch teaches thefe young gentlemen now they were come to age (being about twenty-one years old) not to look upon Egypt as their home, nor to incorporate themfelves with the Egyptians, but to take their lot with the people of God, as Mofes after in the like temptation, *Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26*. And becaufe it would be a piece of felf-denial in them, who flood fo fair for preferment in Egypt, to adhere to the defpifed Hebrews, to encourage them, he conftitutes each of them the head of a tribe. Note, Thofe are worthy of double honour, who, through God's grace, break through the temptations of worldly wealth and preferment to embrace religion in difgrace and poverty. Jacob will have Ephraim and Manaffeh to believe, that it is better be low, and in the church, than high, and out of it; to be called by the name of poor Jacob, better than to be called by the name of rich Joseph.

3. A proviso inferted concerning his children he might afterwards have, that they fhould not be accounted heads of tribes, as Ephraim and Manaffeh were, but fhould fall in with either the one or the other of their brethren, ver. 6. It doth not appear that Joseph had any more children, however it was Jacob's prudence to give this direktion, for the preventing of conteft, and mifmanagement. Note, In making fettlements it is good to take advice, and to provide for what may happen, while we cannot forefee what will happen. Our prudence muft attend God's providence.

4. Mention is made of the death and burial of Rachel, Joseph's mother, and Jacob's beft beloved wife, ver. 7. referring to that ftory, *Gen. xxxv. 19*. Note, (1.) When we come to die ourfelves, it is good to call to mind the death of our dear relations and friends, that are gone before us, to make death and the grave the more familiar to us. See *Numb. xxvii. 13*. Thofe that were to us as our own fouls, are dead and buried, and fhall we think much to follow them in the fame path? (2.) The removal of dear relations from us is an affliction, the remembrance of which cannot but abide with us a great while. Strong afflictions in the enjoyment caufe long afflictions in the lofs.

8. And Israel beheld Joseph's fons, and faid, Who are thefe? 9. And Joseph faid unto his father, They are my fons, whom God hath given me in this place: And he faid, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will blefs them. 10. (Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, fo that he could not fee :) And he brought them near unto him; and he kifled them, and embraced them. 11. And Israel faid unto Joseph, I had not thought to fee thy face: and lo, God hath fhewed me alfo thy feed. 12. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himfelf with his face to the earth. 13. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Israel's left hand, and Manaffeh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. 14. And Israel ftretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manaffeh's head: guiding his hands wittingly; for Manaffeh was the firft-born. 15. And he blefled Joseph, and faid, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Ifaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, 16. The angel which redeemed me from all evil, blefs the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Ifaac: and let them grow into a multitude in the midft of the earth. 17. And when Joseph faw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it difpleafed him: and he held up his fathers hand to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manaffeh's head. 18. And Joseph faid unto his father, Not fo, my father: for this is the firft-born; put thy right hand upon his head. 19. And his father refufed, and faid, I know it, my fon, I know it; he alfo fhall become a people, and he alfo fhall be great, but truly his younger brother fhall be greater than he, and his feed fhall become a multitude of nations. 20. And he blefled them that day, faying, In

thee fhall Israel blefs, faying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manaffeh: and he fet Ephraim before Manaffeh. 21. And Israel faid unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God fhall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. 22. Moreover, I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my fword and with my bow.

Here is, 1. The blefing wherewith Jacob blefled the two fons of Joseph, which is the more remarkable, becaufe the apoftle makes fuch particular mention of it, *Heb. xi. 21*, when he faith nothing of Jacob's blefing which he pronounced on the reft of his fons, tho' that alfo was done in faith.

Obferve here, (1.) That Jacob was blind for age, ver. 10. It is one of the common infirmities of old age, *They that look out at the windows are darkened*, *Eccl. xii. 3*. It is folly to *walk in the fight of our eyes*, and to fuffer our hearts to go after them, while we know death will fhortly clofe them, and we do not know but fome accident between, and death, may darken them. Jacob, like his father before him, when he was old was dim-fighted. Note, 1. Thofe that have the honour of age, muft therewith be content to take the burthen of it. 2. The eye of faith may be very clear, even then when the eye of the body is very much clouded.

(2.) That Jacob was very fond of Joseph's fons. He kifled them and embraced them, ver. 10. It is common for old people to have a very particular affection for their grand-children, perhaps more than they had for their own when they were little; which Solomon gives a reafon for, *Prov. xvii. 6. Children are the crown of old men*, with what a fatisfaction doth Jacob fay it here, ver. 11. *I had not thought to fee thy face*, having many years given him up for loft, and lo, God hath fhewed me alfo thy feed. See here, 1. How thefe two good men own God in their comforts. Joseph faith, ver. 9, they are my fons whom God has given me, and, to magnify the favour, he adds, in this place of my banifhment, flavery, and imprifonment. Jacob faith here, *God hath fhewed me thy feed*. Our comforts are then doubly fweet to us when we fee them coming from God's hand. 2. How often God in his merciful providences out-does our expectations, which greatly magnifies his favours. He not only prevents our fears, but exceeds our hopes. We may apply this to the promife which is made to us and to our children: We could not have thought that we fhould have been taken into covenant with God ourfelves, confidering how guilty and corrupt we are, and yet lo he has fhewed us our feed alfo in covenant with him.

(3.) That before he entails his blefing, he recounts his experiences of God's goodnefs to him. He had fpoken, ver. 3, of God's appearing to him. The particular vifits of his grace, and the fpecial communion we have fometimes had with him ought never to be forgotten: But, ver. 15, 16, he mentions the conftant care which the divine providence had taken of him all his days. (1.) He had *fed him all his life long unto this day*, ver. 15. Note, As long as we have lived in this world we have had continual experience of God's goodnefs to us in providing for the fupport of our natural life. Our bodies have called for daily food, and no little has gone to feed us, yet we have never wanted food convenient. He that has fed us *all our life long*, furely will not fail us at laft. (2.) He had by his angel *redeemed him from all evil*, ver. 16. A great deal of hardfhip he had known in his time, but God had graciously kept him from the evil of his troubles. Now he was dying, he looked upon himfelf as redeemed from all evil, and bidding an everlafting farewell to fin and sorrow. Chrift, the angel of the covenant, is he that redeems us from all evil, *2 Tim. iv. 18*. Note, 1. It becomes the fervants of God when they are old and dying, to witnefs for our God that they have found him gracious. 2. Our experiences of God's goodnefs to us are improveable, both for the encouragement of others to ferve God, and for encouragement to us in blefing them, and praying for them.

(4.) That when he confers the blefing and name of Abraham and Ifaac upon them, he recommends the pattern and example of Abraham and Ifaac to them, ver. 15. He calls God, the *God before whom my fathers Abraham and Ifaac walked*, i. e. in whom they believed, whom they obferved and obeyed, and with whom they kept up communion in instituted ordinances, according to the condition of the covenant. *Walk before me*, *Gen. xvii. 1*. Note, (1.) Thofe that would inherit the blefing of their godly anceftors, and have the benefit of God's covenant with them, muft tread in the fteps of their piety. (2.) It fhould recommend religion and the fervice of God to us, that God was the God of our fathers, and they had fatisfaction in walking before him.

(5.) That in blefing them he *croffed hands*. Joseph placed them fo as that Jacob's right hand fhould be put on the head of Manaffeh, the eldeft, ver. 12, 13. But Jacob would put it on the head of Ephraim the youngeft, ver. 14. This difpleafed Joseph, who was willing to fupport the reputation of his firft-born, and would therefore have removed his father's hands, ver. 17, 18. But Jacob



cob gave him to understand that he knew what he did, and that he did it neither by mistake, nor in a humour, nor from a partial affection to one more than the other, but from a spirit of prophecy, and in compliance with the divine counsels. Manasseh should be great, but truly Ephraim should be greater. When the tribes were mustered in the wilderness, Ephraim was more numerous than Manasseh, and had the standard of that Squadron, *Numb. i. 32, 33, 35.*—ii. 18, 20. and is named first, *Psal. lxxx. 2.* Joshua was of that tribe, so was Jeroboam. The tribe of Manasseh was divided, one half on one side Jordan, the other half on the other side, which made it the less powerful and considerable. In the fore-sight of this *Jacob crossed hands.* Note, 1. God in bestowing his blessings upon his people, gives more to some than to others, more gifts, graces, and comforts, and more of the good things of this life. 2. He often gives most to those that are least likely. *He chuseth the weak things of the world;* raiseth the poor out of the dust. Grace observes not the order of nature, nor doth God prefer those whom we think fittest to be preferred, but as it pleaseth him. It is observable, how oft God, by the distinguishing favours of his covenant, advanced the younger above the elder. Abel above Cain, Shem above Japhet: Abraham above Nahor and Haran, Isaac above Ishmael: Jacob above Esau: Judah and Joseph were preferred before Reuben; Moses before Aaron; David before his elder brethren, and Solomon after him. See *1 Sam. xvi. 7.* He tied the Jews to observe the birth-right, *Deut. xxi. 17.* but he never tied himself to observe it. Some make this typical of the preference given to the Gentiles above the Jews; the Gentile converts were much more numerous than those of the Jews. See *Gal. iv. 27.* Thus free grace becomes more illustrious.

2. The particular tokens of his favour to Joseph. 1. He left with him the promise of their return out of Egypt, as a sacred trust, *ver. 21. I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again,* accordingly Joseph, when he died, left it with his brethren, *chap. l. 24.* This assurance was given them, and carefully preserved among them, that they might neither love Egypt too much when it favoured them, nor fear it too much when it frowned upon them. These words of Jacob furnish us with comfort, in reference to the death of our friends; *they die.* But (1.) *God shall be with us,* and his gracious presence is sufficient to make up the loss. They leave us, but he will never fail us. (2.) He will bring us to the land of our fathers, the heavenly Canaan, whether our godly fathers are gone before us. If God be with us while we stay behind in this world, and will receive us shortly to be with them that are gone before to a better world, we ought not to sorrow as those that have no hope.

2. He bestowed one portion upon him above his brethren, *ver. 22.* The lands bequeathed are described to be those which he took out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword, and with his bow. He purchaseth them first, *Josh. xxiv. 32.* and it seems was afterwards disseized of them by the Amorites, but retook them by the sword, repelling force by force, and recovering his right by violence, when he could not otherwise recover it. These lands he settled upon Joseph; mention is made of this grant, *Josh. iv. 5.* Pursuant to it this parcel of ground was given to the tribe of Ephraim, as their right, and the lot was never cast upon it; and in it Joseph's bones were buried, which perhaps Jacob had an eye to, as much as to any thing in this settlement. Note, It may sometimes be both just and prudent to give some children portions above the rest: but a grave is that which we can most count upon as our own in this earth.

## C H A P. XLIX.

This chapter is a prophecy: The likest to it we have yet met with was that of Noah, *Gen. ix. 25.* Jacob is here upon his death-bed, making his will: He put it off till now, because dying mens words used to make deep impressions, and to be remembered long: What he said here he could not say when he would, but as the spirit gave him utterance, who chose this time that divine strength might be perfected in his weakness. The twelve sons of Jacob were in their day men of renown, but the twelve tribes of Israel, which descended and were denominated from them, were much more renowned, we find their names upon the gates of the new Jerusalem, *Rev. xxi. 12.* In the prospect of which their dying father saith something remarkable of each son, or of the tribe that bore his name. Here is, 1. The preface, *ver. 1, 2.* 2. The prediction concerning each tribe, *ver. 3—28.* 3. The charge repeated concerning his burial, *ver. 29—32.* 4. His death, *ver. 33.*

1. **A**ND Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. 2. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. 3. Reuben, thou art

my first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. 4. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy fathers bed, then defiledst thou it; he went up to my couch.

Here is, 1. the preface to the prophecy, in which (i.) the congregation is called together, *ver. 1, 2. Gather yourselves together;* let them all be sent for from their several employments, to see their father die, and to hear his dying words. It was a comfort to Jacob now he was dying, to see all his children about him; and none missing, tho' he had sometimes thought himself bereaved: It was of use to them to attend him in his last moments, that they might learn of him how to die, as well as how to live: What he said to each, he said in the hearing of all the rest, for we may profit by the reproofs, counsels, and comforts, that are principally intended for others. His calling upon them once and again to gather together, intimated both a precept to them to unite in love, to keep together, not to mingle with the Egyptians, nor to forsake the assembling of themselves together, and a prediction that they should not be separated from each other, as Abraham's sons and Isaac's were, but should be incorporated, and all make one people. (2.) A general idea is given of the intended discourse, *ver. 1. that I may tell you that which shall befall you,* not your persons but your posterity in the latter days, the prediction of which would be of use to those that came after them, for the confirming of their faith, and the guiding of their way, at their return to Canaan, and their settlement there. We cannot tell our children what shall befall them, or their families, in this world; but we can tell them, from the word of God, what will befall them in the last day of all, according as they carry themselves in this world. (3.) Attention is demanded, *ver. 2. hearken to Israel your father:* Let Israel that has prevailed with God prevail with you: Note, Children must diligently hearken to what their godly parents say, particularly when they are dying, *Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father,* which carries with it both authority and affection, *Prov. iv. 1.*

2. The prophecy concerning Reuben: He begins with him, *ver. 3, 4.* He was the first-born, but by committing uncleanness with his father's wife, to the great reproach of the family, which he ought to have been an ornament to, he forfeited the prerogatives of the birth-right, and his dying father here solemnly degrades him, tho' he doth not disown or disinherit him: He shall have all the privileges of a son, but not of a first-born: We have reason to think Reuben had repented of his sin, and it was pardoned, yet it was a necessary piece of justice, in detestation of the villany, and for warning to others, to put this mark of disgrace upon him. Now according to the method of degrading, 1. Jacob here puts upon him the ornaments of the birth-right, *ver. 3.* that he and all his brethren might see what he had forfeited, and in that might see the evil of the sin: As the first-born, he was his father's joy, almost his pride, being the beginning of his strength. How welcome he was to his parents, his name speaks, Reuben, see a son. To him belonged the excellency of dignity above his brethren, and some power over them. Christ Jesus is the first-born among many brethren, and to him of right belongs the most excellent power and dignity: his church also, through him, is a church of first-born. 2. He then strips him of these ornaments, *ver. 4.* lifts him up that he may cast him down, by that one word, *Thou shalt not excel;* a being thou shalt have as a tribe, but not an excellency: No judge, prophet, or prince, are found of that tribe, nor any person of renown, only Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their impious rebellion against Moses. That tribe, as not aiming to excel, meanly chose a settlement on the other side Jordan. Reuben himself seems to have lost all that influence upon his brethren which his birth-right intitled him to, for when he spake unto them they would not hear, *chap. xlii. 22.* Those that have not understanding and spirit to support the honours and privileges of their birth will soon lose them, and retain only the name of them. The character fastened upon Reuben, for which he is laid under this mark of infamy is, that he was unstable as water. (1.) His virtue was unstable, he had not the government of himself, and his own appetites: sometimes he would be very regular, and orderly, but at other times he had strange looses. Note, Instability is the ruin of mens excellency. Men do not thrive, because they do not fix. (2.) His honour consequently was unstable, it departed from him, vanished into smoke, and became as water spilt upon the ground. Note, Those that throw away their virtue must not expect to save their reputation. Jacob charges him particularly with the sin for which he was thus disgraced, *Thou wentest up to thy father's bed.* It was forty years ago that he had been guilty of this sin, yet now it is remembered against him. Note, A time will not of itself wear off the guilt of any sin from the conscience, so there are some sins which it will not wipe off the stain of from the good name, especially seventh commandment sins. Reuben's sin left an indelible mark of infamy upon his family; a dishonour that was a wound not to be healed without a scar,



<sup>a</sup> scar, *Prov.* vi. 32, 33. Let us never do evil, and then we need not fear being told of it.

5. Simeon and Levi are brethren: instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. 6. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. 7. Cursed be their anger for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

These were next in age to Reuben, and they also had been a grief and shame to Jacob, when they treacherously and barbarously destroyed the Shechemites, which he here remembers against them: Children should be afraid of incurring their parents just displeasure, lest they fare the worst for it long after, and when they would inherit the blessing be rejected. Observe, 1. The character of Simeon and Levi, they were brethren in disposition, but unlike their father, they were passionate and revengeful, fierce and wilful; their swords that should have been only weapons of defence, were (as the margin reads it, *ver.* 5.) *weapons of violence*, to do wrong to others, not to save themselves from wrong. Note, It is no new thing for the temper of children to differ very much from that of their parents; we need not think it strange, it was so in Jacob's family. It is not in the power of parents, no, not by education, to form the dispositions of their children; Jacob bred his sons to every thing that was mild and quiet, and yet they proved to be thus furious. 2. A proof of this in the murder of the Shechemites, which Jacob deeply repented, *chap.* xxxiv. 30. and retained the repentment of. They slew a man, Shechem himself, and many another, and to effect that they digged down a wall, broke the houses to plunder them, and murder the inhabitants. Note, The best governors cannot always restrain those under their charge from committing the worst villanies. And when two in a family are mischievous, they commonly make one another so much the worse, and it were wisdom to part them. Simeon and Levi, it is probable, were most active in the wrong done to Joseph, which some think Jacob has here some reference to, for in their anger they would have slain that man. Observe what a mischievous thing self-will is in young people; Simeon and Levi would not be advised by their aged and experienced father; no, they would be governed by their own passion, rather than by his prudence: young people would better consult their own interest, if they would less indulge their own will. 3. Jacob's protestation against this barbarous act of theirs, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret*. Hereby he professeth not only his abhorrence of such practices in general, but his innocency particularly in that matter. Perhaps he had been suspected as under-hand aiding and abetting; he therefore thus solemnly expresseth his detestation of the fact, that he might not die under that suspicion. Note, 1. Our soul is our honour, by it's powers and faculties we are distinguished from, and dignified above, the beasts that perish. 2. We ought, from our hearts, to detest and abhor all society and confederacy with bloody and mischievous men. We must not be ambitious of coming into their secret, or knowing the depths of Satan. 4. His abhorrence of those brutish lusts that led them to this wickedness, *Cursed be their anger*: He doth not curse their persons, but their lusts. Note, 1. Anger is the cause and original of a great deal of sin, and exposeth us to the curse of God, and his judgment, *Matth.* v. 22. 2. We ought always in the expressions of our zeal carefully to distinguish between the sinner and the sin, so as not to love or bless the sin, for the sake of the person, nor to hate or curse the person for the sake of the sin. 5. A token of displeasure which he foretels their posterity should lie under for this: *I will divide them*. The Levites were scattered throughout all the tribes, and Simeon's lot lay not together, and was so strait, that many of the tribe were forced to disperse themselves in quest of settlements and subsistence. This curse was afterwards turned into a blessing to the Levites; but the Simeonites, for Zimri's sin, *Numb.* xxv, had it bound on. Note, Shameful dispersions are the just punishment of sinful unions and confederacies.

8. Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy fathers children shall bow down before thee. 9. Judah is a lions whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. 11. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his asses colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine,

and his cloaths in the blood of grapes. 12. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

Glorious things are here said of Judah. The mention of the crimes of the three eldest of his sons, had not so put the dying patriarch out of humour, but that he had a blessing ready for Judah, to whom blessings belonged. Judah's name signifies praise, in allusion to which he saith, *Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise*, *ver.* 8. God was praised for him, (*Gen.* xxix 35.) praised by him, and praised in him, and therefore his brethren shall praise him. Note, Those that are to God for a praise, shall be the praise of their brethren.

It is prophesied, 1. That the tribe of Judah should be victorious and successful in war, thy hand in the neck of thine enemies. This was fulfilled in David, *Psal.* xviii. 40. 2. That it should be superior to the rest of the tribes, not only in itself more numerous and illustrious, but having a dominion over them, thy father's children shall bow down before thee: Judah was the lawgiver, *Psal.* lx. 7. That tribe led the van through the wilderness, and in the conquest of Canaan, *Judg.* i. 2. The prerogatives of the birthright which Reuben had forfeited, the excellency of dignity and power were thus conferred upon Judah. Observe, Thy brethren shall bow down before thee, and yet shall praise thee, reckoning themselves happy in having so wise and bold a commander. Note, Honour and power is then a blessing to those that have it, when it is not grudged and envied, but praised and applauded, and cheerfully submitted to. 3. That it should be a strong and courageous tribe, and so qualified for command and conquest, *ver.* 9. *Judah is a lion's whelp*. The lion is the king of beasts, the terror of the forest when he roars, when he seizeth his prey none can resist him; when he goes up from the prey none dares pursue him to revenge it; by this it is foretold, that the tribe of Judah should become very formidable, and should not only obtain great victories, but should peaceably and quietly enjoy what was got by those victories; that they should make war, not for war's sake, but for peace sake. Judah is compared not to a lion rampant, always tearing, always raging, always ranging, but to a lion couchant, enjoying the satisfaction of his power and success, without creating vexation to others, this is to be truly great. 4. That it should be the royal tribe, and the tribe from which Messiah the prince shall come, *ver.* 10, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come*. Jacob here foresees and foretels, (1.) That the sceptre should come out of the tribe of Judah, which was fulfilled in David, on whose family the crown was entailed. (2.) That Shiloh should be of this tribe; his seed, that promised seed in whom the earth should be blessed. That peaceable prosperous one, or, the Saviour, so others translate it, he shall come of Judah. Thus dying Jacob, at a great distance saw Christ's day, and it was his comfort and support on his death-bed. (3.) That after the coming of the sceptre into the tribe of Judah it should continue in that tribe, at least a government of their own till the coming of the Messiah, in whom, as the king of the church, and the great high-priest, it was fit that both the priesthood and the royalty should determine. Till the captivity, all along from David's time, the sceptre was in Judah, and from thence governors of that tribe, or of the Levites that adhered to it, which was equivalent, till Judea became a province of the Roman empire just at the time of our saviour's birth, and was at that time taxed as one of the provinces, *Luke* ii. 1. And at the time of his death the Jews expressly owned, *We have no king but Cæsar*. Hence it is undeniably inferred against the Jews that our Lord Jesus is he that should come, and we are to look for no other, for he came exactly at the time appointed: Many excellent pens have been admirably well employed in explaining and illustrating this famous prophecy of Christ. 5. That it should be a very fruitful tribe, especially that it should abound with milk for babes, and wine to make glad the heart of strong men, *ver.* 11, 12. Vines so common in the hedge-rows and so strong that they should tie their asses to them, and so fruitful they should load their asses from them: Wine as plentiful as water, so that the men of that tribe should be very healthful and lively, their eyes brisk and sparkling, their teeth white. Much of that which is here said concerning Judah is to be applied to our Lord Jesus. 1. He is the ruler of all his father's children, and the conqueror of all his father's enemies, and he it is that is the praise of all the saints. 2. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah, as he is called with reference to this here, *Rev.* v. 5. who having spoiled principalities and powers went up a conqueror, and couched so as none can stir him up when he sat down on the right hand of the Father. 3. To him belongs the sceptre, he is the law-giver, and to him shall the gathering of the people be, as the desire of all nations, *Hag.* ii. 7. who being lifted up from the earth should draw all men unto him, *John* xii. 32. and in whom the children of God that are scattered abroad should meet as the centre of their unity, *John* xi. 52. 4. In him there is plenty of all that which is nourishing and refreshing to the soul, and which maintains and cheers the divine life in it, in him we may have wine and milk, the riches of Judah's tribe, without money, and without price, *Isa.* lv. 1.



13. Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea : and he shall be for a haven of ships ; and his border shall be unto Zidon. 14. Issachar is a strong ass, couching down between two burdens. 15. And he saw that rest was good, and the land, that it was pleasant ; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. 16. Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. 17. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backwards. 18. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD. 19. Gad, a troop shall overcome him : but he shall overcome at the last. 20. Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties. 21. Naphtali is a hind let loose : he giveth goodly words.

Here we have Jacob's prophecy concerning six of his sons.

1. Concerning Zebulun, that his posterity should have their lot upon the sea coast, and should be merchants, and mariners, and traders at sea, *ver. 13.* This was fulfilled, when two or three hundred years after, the land of Canaan was divided by lot, and the border of Zebulun went up towards the sea, *Josh. xix. 11.* Had they chosen their lot themselves, or Joshua appointed it, we might have supposed it done with design to make Jacob's words good, but being done by lot, it appears that that was divinely disposed, and Jacob divinely inspired. Note, The lot of God's providence exactly agrees with the plan of God's counsel, like a true copy with the original. If prophecy saith, Zebulun shall be a haven of ships, providence will so plant him. Note, 1. God appointeth the bounds of our habitation. 2. It is our wisdom and duty to accommodate ourselves to our lot, and to improve it. If Zebulun dwell at the haven of the sea let him be for a haven of ships.

2. Concerning Issachar, *ver. 14, 15.* (1.) That the men of that tribe should be strong and industrious, fit for labour, and inclined to labour, particularly the toil of husbandry, like the ass, that patiently carries his burthen, and by using himself to it makes it the easier. Issachar submitted to two burthens, tillage and tribute. It was a tribe that took pains, and thriving thereby was called upon for rents and taxes. (2.) That they should be encouraged in their labour by the goodness of the land that should fall to their lot. (1.) He saw that rest at home was good. Note, The labour of the husbandman is really rest in comparison with that of soldiers and seamen, whose hurries and perils are such, that those who tarry at home in the most constant service have no reason to envy them. (2.) He saw that the land was pleasant, yielding not only pleasant prospects to charm the eye of the curious, but pleasant fruits to recompense his toils. Many are the pleasures of a country life, abundantly sufficient to balance the inconveniencies of it, if we can but persuade ourselves to think so. Issachar, in prospect of advantage, bowed his shoulder to bear : Let us, with an eye of faith, see the heavenly rest to be good, and that land of promise to be pleasant, and that will make our present services easy, and encourage us to bow our shoulder to them.

3. Concerning Dan, *ver. 16, 17.* What is said concerning Dan has reference either, 1. To that tribe in general ; that tho' Dan was one of the sons of the concubines, yet he should be a tribe governed by judges of his own as well as other tribes ; and should by art, and policy, and surprize, gain advantages against his enemies, like a serpent suddenly biting the heel of the traveller. Note, (1.) In God's spiritual Israel there is no distinction made of bond or free, *Col. iii. 11.* Dan shall be incorporated by as good a character as any of the other tribes. (2.) Some, like Dan, may excel in the subtilty of the serpent, as others, like Judah, in the courage of the lion, and both may do good service to the cause of God against the Canaanites. Or, It may refer, 2. To Samson who was of that tribe, and judged Israel, *i. e.* delivered them out of the hands of the Philistines, not as the other judges, by fighting them in the field, but by the vexations and annoyances he gave them under-hand : when he pulled the house down under the Philistines that were upon the roof of it, he made the horse throw his rider.

Thus was Jacob going on with his discourse, but now being almost spent with speaking, and ready to faint and die away, he relieves himself with those words which come in as a parenthesis, *ver. 18, I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,* as those that are fainting are helped by taking a spoonful of a cordial, or smelling at a bottle of spirits : Or, if he must break off here, and his breath will not serve him to finish what he intended, with these words he pours out his soul into the bosom of his God, and even breathes it out. Note, The pious ejaculations of a warm and lively devotion, though sometimes they may be incoherent, yet they are not therefore to be censured as impertinent ; that may be uttered affectionately which doth not come in methodically. It is no absurdity when we are speaking to men, to lift up our hearts to God. The salvation he waited for was, (1.)

Christ, the promised seed, whom he had spoken of, *ver. 10.* now he was going to be gathered to his people, he breathes after him to whom the gathering of the people shall be. (2.) Heaven the better country, which he declared plainly that he fought, *Heb. xi. 13, 14.* and continued seeking now he was in Egypt. Now he is going to enjoy the salvation, he comforts himself with this, that he had waited for the salvation. Note, 1. It is the character of a living faint that he waits for the salvation of the Lord : Christ, as our way to Heaven, is to be waited on, and Heaven, as our rest in Christ, is to be waited for. 2. It is the comfort of a dying faint thus to have waited for the salvation of the Lord, for then he shall have what he has been waiting for : Long looked for will come.

4. Concerning Gad, *ver. 19.* He alludes to his name, which signifies a troop, foresees the character of that tribe, that it should be a warlike tribe, and so we find, *1 Chron. xii. 8.* the Gadites were men of war fit for the battle. He foresees that the situation of that tribe on the other side Jordan would expose it to the incursions of its neighbours, Moabites and Ammonites ; and that they might not be proud of their strength and valour, he foretells that the troops of their enemies should, in many skirmishes, overcome them ; yet that they might not be discouraged by their defeats, he assures them that they should overcome at the last, which was fulfilled when, in Saul's time and David's, the Moabites and Ammonites were wholly subdued : See *1 Chron. v. 18, &c.* Note, The cause of God and his people, though it may seem for a time to be baffled and run down, yet it will be victorious at last, *Vincimur in prælio sed non in bello* : Grace in the soul is oft foiled in its conflicts. Troops of corruption overcome it, but the cause is God's, and grace will in the issue come off conqueror, *yea more than a conqueror*, *Rom. viii. 37.*

5. Concerning Asher, *ver. 20.* That it should be a very rich tribe, replenished not only with bread for necessity, but with fatness, with dainties, royal dainties, (for the king himself is served of the field, *Eccl. v. 9.*) and these exported out of Asher, to other tribes, perhaps to other lands. Note, The God of nature has provided for us not only necessaries but dainties, that we might call him a bountiful benefactor ; yet whereas all places are competently furnished with necessaries, only some places afford dainties. Corn is more common than spices : Were the supports of luxury as universal as the supports of life, the world would be worse than it is, and that needs not.

6. Concerning Naphtali, *ver. 21.* a tribe that carries struggles in its name, it signifies wrestling, and the blessing entailed upon it signifies prevailing, it is a hind let loose. Though we find not this prediction so fully answered in the event as some of the rest, yet no doubt it proved true, that those of this tribe were, 1. As the loving hind, (for that is her epithet, *Prov. v. 10.*) friendly and obliging to one another, and to other tribes ; their converse remarkably kind and endearing. 2. As the loosened hind, zealous for their liberty. 3. As the swift hind, *Pf. xviii. 33.* quick in dispatch of business, and perhaps, 4. As the trembling hind, timorous in times of public danger. It is rare that those that are most amiable to their friends are most formidable to their enemies. 5. That they should be affable and courteous, their language refined, and they complaisant, giving goodly words. Note, Among God's Israel there is to be found a great variety of dispositions, contrary to each other, yet all contributing to the beauty and strength of the body ; Judah like a lion, Issachar like an ass, Dan like a serpent, Naphtali like a hind. Let not those of different tempers and gifts censure one another or envy one another, no more than those of different statures and complexions.

22. Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well ; whose branches run over the wall. 23. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him. 24. But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong, by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob : from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel. 25. Even by the God of thy father who shall help thee, and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb. 26. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills ; they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. 27. Benjamin shall ravin as wolf : in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.

He closes with the blessings of his best beloved sons, Joseph and Benjamin, with these he will breathe his last.

1. The blessing of Joseph, which is very large and full. He is compared, *ver. 22,* to a fruitful bough, or young tree, for God had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction, he owned it,



chap. xli. 52. His two sons were as branches of a vine, or other spreading plant running over the wall. Note, God can make those fruitful, great comforts to themselves and others, who have been looked upon as dry and withered. More is recorded in the history concerning Joseph than concerning any other of Jacob's sons, and therefore what Jacob saith of him is historical as well as prophetic. Observe,

(1.) The providences of God concerning Joseph, *ver.* 23, 24. These are mentioned to the glory of God, and for the encouragement of Jacob's faith and hope, that God had blessings in store for his seed. Here is, (1.) Joseph's straits and troubles, *ver.* 23. Though he now lived at ease, and in honour, Jacob minds him of the difficulties he had formerly waded through. He had had many enemies, here called Archers, being skillful to do mischief, masters of their art of persecution, they hated him, their persecution begins: they shot their poisonous darts at him, and thus they sorely grieved him. His brethren in his father's house were very spiteful towards him, mocked him, stripped him, threatened him, sold him, thought they had been the death of him. His mistress, in the house of Potiphar, sorely grieved him, and shot at him, when she impudently solicited his chastity; temptations are fiery darts, thorns in the flesh, sorely grievous to gracious souls: when she prevailed not in this, hated him, and shot at him, by her false accusations, arrows which there is little fence against, but the hold God has in the consciences of the worst of men. Doubtless he had enemies in the court of Pharaoh that envied his preferment, and sought to undermine him. (2.) Joseph's strength and support under all these troubles, *ver.* 24, *His bow abode in strength*, i. e. his faith did not fail, but he kept his ground, and came off a conqueror. The *arms of his hands were made strong*, i. e. His other graces did their part, his wisdom, courage, patience, which are better than weapons of war. In short, he maintained both his integrity, and his comfort through all his trials: he bore all his burthens with an invincible resolution, and did not sink under them, nor do any thing unbecoming him. (3.) The spring and fountain of this strength: It was by the hands of the mighty God, who was therefore able to strengthen him, and the God of Jacob, a God in covenant with him, and therefore engaged to help him. All our strength for the resisting of temptations, and the bearing of afflictions comes from God: his grace is sufficient, and his strength perfected in our weakness. (4.) The state of honour and usefulness he was advanced to after this, from thence from this strange method of providence he became the shepherd and stone, the feeder and supporter of God's Israel, Jacob and his family. Herein Joseph was a type, 1. Of Christ; he was shot at and hated, but born up under his sufferings, *Isa.* l. 7, 8, 9. and was afterwards advanced to be the shepherd and stone. 2. Of the church in general, and particular believers; hell shoots it's arrows against the faints, but Heaven protects and strengthens them, and will crown them.

(2.) The promises of God to Joseph: See how these are connected with the former, *ver.* 25. *Even by the God of thy father Jacob who shall help thee.* Note, Our experiences of God's power and goodness in strengthening us hitherto are our encouragements still to hope for help from him: he that has helped us will: we may build much upon our Eben-Ezers: See what Joseph may expect from the Almighty, even the God of his father. 1. He shall help thee in difficulties and dangers which may yet be before thee, help thy seed in their wars, Joshua came from him, who commanded in chief in the wars of Canaan. 2. He shall bless thee; and he only blesteth indeed. Jacob prays for a blessing upon Joseph, but the God of Jacob commands the blessing. Observe the blessings conferred on Joseph, 1. Various and abundant blessings. Blessings of Heaven above, rain in it's season, and fair weather in it's season, and the benign influences of the heavenly bodies, blessings of the deep that lies under this earth, which compared with the upper world is but a great deep, or with subterraneous mines and springs. Spiritual blessings are blessings of Heaven above, which we ought to desire and seek for in the first place, and to which we must give the preference, whilst temporal blessings, those of this earth must lie under in our account and esteem. Blessings of the womb and the breasts are given when children are safely born, and comfortably nursed. In the word of God by which we are born again, and nourished up, (*1 Pet.* i. 23.—ii. 2.) there are to the new man blessings both of the womb and the breasts. 2. Eminent and transcendent blessings which prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors, *ver.* 16. His father Isaac had but one blessing, and when he had given that to Jacob, he was at a loss for a blessing to bestow upon Esau, but Jacob had a blessing for each of his twelve sons, and now at the latter end a copious one for Joseph. The great blessing entailed upon that family was increase, which did not so immediately and so signally follow the blessings which Abraham and Isaac gave to their sons, as it followed that which Jacob gave to his, for soon after his death they multiplied exceedingly. 3. Durable and extensive blessings: unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills, including all the products of the most fruitful hills, and, lasting as long as they last, *Isa.* liv. 10. Note, The blessings of the everlasting God

include the riches of the everlasting hills, and much more. Well, of these blessings it is here said they shall be, so it is a promise, or let them be so it is a prayer, on the head of Joseph, to which let them be as a crown to adorn it, and a helmet to protect it: Joseph was separated from his brethren (so we read it) for a time; yet (as others read it) he was a Nazarite among his brethren better and more excellent than they. Note, It is no new thing for the best men to meet with the worst usage; for Nazarites among their brethren to be cast out and separated from their brethren, but the blessing of God will make it up to them.

2. The blessing of Benjamin, *ver.* 27. He shall ravin as a wolf: It is plain by this that Jacob was guided in what he said by a spirit of prophecy, and not by natural affection, else he would have spoken with more tenderness of his beloved son Benjamin, concerning whom he only foresees and foretels this, that his posterity should be a warlike tribe, strong and daring, and that they should enrich themselves with the spoil of their enemies; that they should be active and busy in the world, and a tribe as much feared by their neighbours as any other; in the morning he shall devour the prey which he seized and divided over night. Or, in the first times of Israel they shall be noted for activity, though many of them left-handed, *Judg.* iii. 15—20. 16. Ehud, the second judge, and Saul, the first king, were of this tribe: And so also in the last times, Esther and Mordecai were of this tribe, by whom the enemies of the Jews were destroyed. The Benjamites ravined like wolves when they desperately espoused the cause of the men of Gibeah, those men of Belial, *Judg.* xx. 14. Blessed Paul was of this tribe, *Rom.* xi. 1. *Phil.* iii. 5. and he did in the morning of his day devour the prey as a persecutor, but did in the evening divide the spoil as a preacher. Note, God can serve his own purposes by the different tempers of men; the deceived and the deceiver are his.

28. All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. 29. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that is the field of Ephron the Hittite. 30. In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. 31. (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah.) 32. The purchase of the field, and of the cave that is therein, was from the children of Heth. 33. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet in the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

Here is, 1. The summing up of the blessings of Jacob's sons, *ver.* 28. Though Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, were put under the marks of their father's displeasure, yet he is said to bless them every one according to his blessing, for none of them were rejected as Esau was. Note, Whatever rebukes of God's word or providence we are under at any time, yet as long as we have an interest in God's covenant, a place and a name among his people, and good hopes of a share in the heavenly Canaan, we must account ourselves blessed.

2. The solemn charge Jacob gave them concerning his burial, which is a repetition of that he had before given to Joseph: See how he speaks of death, now he is dying, *ver.* 29. *I am to be gathered unto my people.* Note, It is good to represent death to ourselves as desirable as may be, that the terror of it may be taken off. Though it separate us from our children, and our people in this world, it gathers us to our fathers, and to our people in the other world. Perhaps Jacob useth this expression concerning death as a reason why his sons should bury him in Canaan, for (saith he) *I am to be gathered unto my people*, my soul must be gone to the spirits of just men made perfect, and therefore bury me with my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and their wives, *ver.* 31. Observe,

1. His heart was very much upon it, not so much from a natural affection to his native soil, as from a principle of faith in the promise of God, that Canaan should be the inheritance of his seed in due time. Thus he would keep up in his sons a remembrance of the promised land, and not only would have their acquaintance with it renewed by a journey thither on that occasion, but their desire towards it and their expectation of it preserved.

2. He is very particular in describing the place, both by the situation of it, and by the purchase Abraham had made of it, for a burying-place, *ver.* 30, 32. He was afraid lest his sons after seventeen years sojourning in Egypt, had forgot Canaan, and even the burying-place of their ancestors there, or lest the Canaanites



naanites should dispute his title to it, and therefore he specifies it thus largely, and the purchase of it, even when he lies a-dying, not only to prevent mistakes, but to shew how mindful he was of that country. Note, It is and should be a great pleasure to dying fain'ts to fix their thoughts upon the heavenly Canaan, and the rest they hope for there after death.

3. The death of Jacob, *ver. 33.* when he had finished both his blessing and his charge (both which are included in the commanding of his sons) and so had finished his testimony, he addressed himself to his dying work. 1. He put himself into a posture for dying; having sitten upon the bed-side to bless his sons, the spirit of prophecy bringing fresh oil to his expiring lamp, (*Dan. x. 19.*) when that work was done he gathered up his feet into the bed, that he might lie along, not only as one patiently submitting to the stroke, but as one chearfully composing himself to rest, now he was weary, *I will lay me down and sleep.* 2. He freely resigned his spirit into the hand of God, the father of spirits; he yielded up the ghost. 3. His separated soul went to the assembly of the *souls of the faithful*, which *after they are delivered from the burthen of the flesh are in joy and felicity*; he was gathered to his people. Note, If God's people be our people, death will gather us to them.

## C H A P. L.

Here is, 1. *The preparation for Jacob's funeral, ver. 1—6.* 2. *The funeral itself, ver. 7—14.* 3. *The settling of a good understanding between Joseph and his brethren after the death of Jacob, ver. 15—21.* 4. *The age and death of Joseph, ver. 22—26.* Thus the book of Genesis which began with the originals of light and life, ends with nothing but death and darkness, so sad a change has sin made.

1. **A**ND Joseph fell upon his fathers face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. 2. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. 3. And forty days were fulfilled for him, (for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed) and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days. 4. And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, 5. My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me, in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. 6. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

Joseph is here paying his last respects to his deceased father,

1. With tears and kisses, and all the tender expressions of a filial affection he takes leave of the deserted body, *ver. 1.* Though Jacob was old and decrepit, and must needs die in a course of nature; though he was poor comparatively, and a constant charge to his son Joseph, yet such an affection he had for a loving father, and so sensible was he of the loss of a prudent, pious, praying father, that he could not part with him without floods of tears. Note, As it is an honour to die lamented, so it is the duty of survivors to lament the death of those that have been useful in their day, though for some time they may have survived their usefulness. The departed soul is out of the reach of our tears and kisses, but with them it is proper to shew our respects to the poor body, which we look for a glorious and joyful resurrection of. Thus Joseph shewed his faith in God, and love to his father, by kissing his pale and cold lips, and so giving an affectionate farewell. Probably the rest of Jacob's sons did the same, much moved, no doubt, with his dying words.

2. He ordered the body to be embalmed, *ver. 2.* not only because he died in Egypt, and that was the manner of the Egyptians, but because he was to be carried to Canaan, which would be a work of time, and therefore it was necessary the body should be preserved as well as it might be from putrefaction. See how vile our bodies are, when the soul has forsaken them, without a great deal of art, and pains, and care, they will in a very little time become noisom. If the body have been dead four days by that time it stinketh.

3. He observed the ceremony of solemn mourning for him, *ver. 3.* forty days were taken up in embalming the body, which the Egyptians (they say) had an art of doing so curiously, as to preserve the very features of the face unchanged: all this time, and thirty days more, seventy in all, they either confined themselves and sate solitary, or when they went out appeared in the habit of close mourners, according to the decent custom of the

country. Even the Egyptians, many of them, out of the great respect they had for Joseph (whose good offices done for the king and country were now fresh in remembrance) put themselves into mourning for his father. As with us when the court goes into mourning, those of the best quality do so too. About ten weeks the court of Egypt was in mourning for Pharaoh. Note, What they did in state we should do in sincerity, weep with them that weep, and mourn with them that mourn, as being ourselves also in the body.

4. He asked and obtained leave of Pharaoh to go to Canaan, thither to attend the funeral of his father, *ver. 4, 5, 6.* (1.) It was a piece of necessary respect to Pharaoh, that he would not go without leave: for we may suppose, though his charge about the corn was long since over, yet he continued a prime minister of state, and therefore would not be so long absent from his business without licence. (2.) He observed a decorum in employing some of the royal family, or some of the officers of the household, to intercede for this licence; either because it was not proper for him in the days of his mourning to come into the presence-chamber, or because he would not presume too much upon his own interest. Note, Modesty is a great ornament to dignity. (3.) He pleaded the obligation his father had laid upon him by an oath to bury him in Canaan, *ver. 5.* It was not in pride or humour but indispensable duty that he desired it. All nations reckon that oaths must be performed, and the will of the dead must be observed. (4.) He promised to return, *I will come again:* When we return to our own houses from burying the bodies of our relations we say, we have left them behind, but if their souls be gone to our heavenly father's house, we may say with more reason, they have left us behind. (5.) He obtained leave, *ver. 6.* *Go and bury thy father:* Pharaoh is willing his business should stand still so long, but the service of Christ is more needful; and therefore he would not allow one that had work to do for him to go first, and bury his father, no, let the dead bury their dead, *Matth. viii. 22.*

7. And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, 8. And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his fathers house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. 9. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great company. 10. And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. 11. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan. 12. And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them. 13. For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah; which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre. 14. And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

We have here an account of Jacob's funeral. Of the funerals, of the kings of Judah, usually no more is said but this, that they were buried with their fathers in the city of David, but the funeral of the patriarch Jacob is more largely and fully described. (1.) To shew how much better God was to him than he expected; he had spoken more than once of dying for grief, and going to the grave, bereaved of his children, but behold he dies in honour, and is followed to the grave by all his children. (2.) Because his orders concerning his burial were given and observed in faith, and in expectation both of the earthly and of the heavenly Canaan.

Now, 1. It was a stately funeral: He was attended to the grave, not only by his own family, but by the courtiers, and all the great men of the kingdom, who, in token of their gratitude to Joseph, shews this respect to his father, for his sake, and did him honour at his death: Though the Egyptians had had an antipathy to the Hebrews, and had looked upon them with disdain, chap. xliii. 22. yet now they were better acquainted with them they began to have a respect for them. Good old Jacob had carried himself so well among them as to gain an universal esteem. Note, Professors of religion should endeavour by wisdom and love to remove the prejudices which many have conceived against them, because they do not know them. There went abundance of chariots and horsemen, not only to attend them a little way, but to go through with them. Note, The decent solemnities



solemnities of funerals, according as mens place is, are very commendable, and we must not say of them to what purpose is this waste? See *Acts* viii. 2. *Luke* vii. 12.

2. It was a sorrowful funeral, *ver.* 10, 11. standers by took notice of it as a grievous mourning. Note, The death of good men is a great loss to any place, and ought to be greatly lamented; Stephen dies a martyr, and yet devout men make great lamentations for him. The solemn mourning for Jacob gave a name to the place, Abel-Mizraim, the mourning of the Egyptians: which served for a testimony against the next generation of the Egyptians, who oppressed the posterity of this Jacob to whom their ancestors shewed such respect.

15. And when Josephs brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure, hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. 16. And they sent messengers unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, 17. So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: And now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. 18. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold we be thy servants. 19. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. 21. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

We have here the settling of a good correspondence between Joseph and his brethren, now their father was dead: Joseph was at court in the royal city, his brethren were in Goshen, remote in the country, yet the keeping up of a good understanding, and a good affection between them would be both his honour, and their interest. Note, When providence has removed the parents by death, the best methods ought to be taken, not only for the preventing of quarrels among the children, which often happen about the dividing of the estate, but for the preserving of acquaintance and love, that unity may continue even when that centre of unity is taken away.

1. Joseph's brethren humbly make their court to him for his favour. (1.) They began to be jealous of Joseph, not that he had given them any cause to be so, but the conscience of guilt, and of their own inability in such a case to forgive and forget, made them suspicious of the sincerity and constancy of Joseph's favour, *ver.* 15, *Joseph will peradventure hate us*; while their father lived they thought themselves safe under his shadow, but now he was dead they feared the worst from Joseph. Note, A guilty conscience exposeth men to continual frights, even where no fear is, and makes them suspicious of every body, as Cain, *Gen.* iv. 14. Those that would be fearless must keep themselves guiltless: If our heart reproach us not, then have we confidence both toward God and man. (2.) They humbled themselves before him, confessed their fault, and begged his pardon: They did it by proxy, *ver.* 17. They did it in person, *ver.* 18. now the sun and moon were set, the eleven stars did obeisance to Joseph, for the further accomplishment of his dream. They speak of their former offence with fresh regret, *forgive the trespass*: they throw themselves at Joseph's feet, and refer themselves to his mercy, *we be thy servants*. Thus we must bewail the sins we committed long ago, even those which we hope through grace are forgiven: And when we pray to God for pardon, we must promise to be his servants. (3.) They pleaded their relation to Jacob and Jacob's God. (1.) To Jacob, urging, that he directed them to make this submission, rather because he questioned whether they would do their duty in humbling themselves, than because he questioned whether Joseph would do his duty in forgiving them; nor could he reasonably expect Joseph's kindness to them, unless they thus qualified themselves for it, *ver.* 16. *Thy father did command*. Thus in humbling ourselves to Christ by faith and repentance, we may plead that it is the command of his Father, and our Father, we should do so. (2.) To Jacob's God: They plead, *ver.* 17. we are the *servants of the God of thy father*; not only children of the same Jacob, but worshippers of the same Jehovah. Note, Tho' we must be ready to forgive all that are any way injurious to us, yet we must especially take heed of bearing malice towards any that are the *servants of the God of our father*: Those we should always treat with a peculiar tenderness, for we and they have the same master.

2. Joseph with a great deal of compassion confirms his reconciliation and affection to them: his compassion appears, *ver.* 17. *He wept when they spake to him*. These were tears of sorrow for

their suspicion of him, and tears of tenderness upon their submission; in his reply;

1. He directs them to look up to God in their repentance, *ver.* 19. *Am I in the place of God?* He in his great humility thought they shewed him too much respect, as if all their happiness were bound up in his favour, and faith to them in effect as Peter to Cornelius, *Stand up, I myself also am a man*. Make your peace with God, and then you will find it an easy matter to make your peace with me. Note, When we ask forgiveness of those whom we have offended, we must take heed of putting them in the place of God, by dreading their wrath, and soliciting their favour more than God's. Am I in the place of God to whom alone vengeance belongs; no, I will leave you to his mercy. Those that avenge themselves step into the *place of God*, *Rom.* xii. 19.

2. He extenuates their fault from the consideration of the great good which God wonderfully brought out of it, which tho' it should not make them the less sorry for their sin, yet it might make him the more willing to forgive it, *ver.* 20. *Ye thought evil, to disappoint the dreams, but God meant it unto good*, in order to the fulfilling of the dreams, and the making of Joseph a greater blessing to his family than otherwise he could have been. Note, 1. When God makes use of mens agency for the performance of his counsels, it is common for him to mean one thing, and them another, even the quite contrary, but God's counsel shall stand: see *Isa.* x. 7. 2. God often brings good out of evil, and serves the designs of his providence, even by the sins of men; not that he is the author of sin, far be it from us to think so, but his infinite wisdom so over-rules events, and directs the chain of them, that in the issue that ends in his praise, which in it's own nature had a direct tendency to his dishonour. As the putting of Christ to death, *Acts* ii. 23. This doth not make sin the less sinful, nor sinners the less punishable, but it redounds greatly to the glory of God's wisdom.

3. He assures them of the continuance of his kindness to them, *Fear not, I will nourish you*, *ver.* 21. see what an excellent spirit Joseph was of, and learn of him to render good for evil. He did not tell them they were upon their good behaviour, and he would be kind to them if he saw they carried themselves well; no, he would not thus hold them in suspense, nor seem jealous of them, tho' they had been suspicious of him: he comforted them, and, to banish all their fears, he spake kindly to them. Note, Broken spirits must be bound up, and encouraged. Those we love and forgive we must not only do well for, but speak kindly to.

22. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his fathers house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. 23. And Joseph saw Ephraims children of the third generation: the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Josephs knees. 24. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. 25. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. 26. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Here is, 1. The prolonging of Joseph's life in Egypt, he lived to be one hundred and ten years old, *ver.* 22. Having honoured his father, his days were long in the land, which, for the present, God had given him, and it was a great mercy to his relations that God continued him so long a support and comfort to them.

2. The building up of Joseph's family; he lived to see his great grand-children, by both his sons, *ver.* 23. and probably he saw his two sons solemnly owned as heads of distinct tribes, equal to any of his brethren. It contributes much to the comfort of aged parents, if they see their posterity in a flourishing condition, especially if with it they see *peace upon Israel*, *Psal.* cxxviii. 6.

3. The last will and testament of Joseph published in the presence of his brethren, when he saw his death approaching: those that were properly his brethren, perhaps were some of them dead before him, several of them were elder than he, but to those of them who yet survived, and to the sons of those who were gone, that stood up in his father's stead, he said this.

1. He comforted them with the assurance of their return to Canaan in due time, *ver.* 24. *I die, but God will surely visit you*. To this purpose Jacob had spoken to him, *chap.* xlviii. 21. Thus must we comfort others with the same comforts wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God, and encourage them to rest on those promises which have been our support. Joseph was, under God, both the protector and benefactor of his brethren, and what would become of them, now he was dying? Why, let this be their comfort, God will surely visit you. Note, God's gracious



cious visits will serve to make up the loss of our best friends. They die, but we may live, and live comfortably if we have the favour and presence of God with us. He bids them be confident, God will bring you out of this land, and therefore, (1.) They must not hope to settle there, nor look upon it as their rest for ever, they must set their hearts upon the land of promise, and call that their home. (2.) They must not fear sinking, and being ruined there: probably he foresaw the ill usage they would meet with there, after his death, and therefore gives them this word of encouragement, God will bring you in triumph out of this land at last. Herein he had an eye to the promise, *Gen. xv. 13, 14.* and in God's name assures them of the performance of it.

2. For a confession of his own faith, and a confirmation of theirs, he chargeth them to keep him unburied till that day, that glorious day, should come when they should be settled in the land of promise, *ver. 25.* He makes them promise him with an oath, that they would bury him in Canaan. In Egypt they buried their

great men very honourably and with abundance of pomp, but Joseph prefers a significant burial in Canaan, and that deferred too almost two hundred years, before a magnificent one in Egypt. Thus Joseph, by faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, and the promise of Canaan gave *commandment concerning his bones*, Heb. xi. 22. He dies in Egypt, but lays his bones at stake, that God will surely visit Israel, and bring them to Canaan.

3. The death of Joseph, and the reservation of his body for a burial in Canaan, *ver. 26.* He was put in a coffin in Egypt, but not buried till his children had received their inheritance in Canaan, *Josh. xxiv. 32.* Note, (1.) If the separate soul at death do but return to it's rest with God, the matter is not great, tho' the deserted body find not at all, or not quickly, it's rest in the grave. (2.) Yet care ought to be taken of the dead bodies of the saints in the belief of their resurrection, for there is a covenant with the dust which shall be remembered, and a commandment given concerning the bones.





# A N E X P O S I T I O N,

W I T H

## PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

Upon the Second Book of Moses, called

# E X O D U S.

*Moses, (the Servant of the Lord in writing for him, as well as in acting for him, with the pen of God, as well as with the rod of God in his hand) having in the first book of his history preserved and transmitted the records of the church while it existed in private families, comes in this second book to give us an account of it's growth into a great nation; and as the former furnisheth us with the best Oeconomics, so this with the best Politics. The beginning of the former book, shews us how God formed the world for himself, the beginning of this shews us how he formed Israel for himself, and both to shew forth his praise. Isa. xliii. 21. There we have the creation of the world in history, here the redemption of the world in type. The Greek translators called this book Exodus, which signifies a departure, or going out, because it begins with the story of the going out of the children of Israel from Egypt. Some allude to the names of this and the foregoing book, and observe, That immediately after Genesis, which signifies, the beginning or original, follows Exodus, which signifies a departure; for a time to be born is immediately succeeded by a time to die: No sooner have we made our entrance into the world, but we must think of making our exit, and going out of the world. When we begin to live, we begin to die. The forming of Israel into a people, was a new creation. As the earth was in the beginning first fetched from under water, and then beautified and replenished; so Israel was first, by an almighty power, made to emerge out of Egyptian slavery, and then enriched with God's law and tabernacle. This book gives us, 1. The accomplishment of the promises made before to Abraham, to chap. xix. And then, 2. The establishment of the ordinances, which were afterwards observed by Israel: thence to the end. Moses in this book begins, like Cæsar, to write his own Commentaries; nay a greater, a far greater, than Cæsar is here: But henceforward the penman is himself the hero, and gives us the history of those things which he was himself an eye and ear witness of, & quorum pars magna fuit. There are more types of Christ in this book, than perhaps in any other book of the Old-Testament, for Moses wrote of him, Joh. v. 46. And the way of man's reconciliation to God, and coming into covenant and communion with him by a mediator, is here variously represented; and it is of great use to us for the illustration of the New-Testament, now we have that to assist us in the explication of the old.*

### C H A P. I.

*We have here, 1. God's kindness to Israel, in multiplying them exceedingly, ver. 1—7. 2. The Egyptians wickedness to them, 1. Oppressing and enslaving them, ver. 8—14. 2. Murthering their children, ver. 15—22. Thus whom the court of Heaven blessed the country of Egypt cursed, and for that reason.*

1. **N**OW these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, every man and his household came with Jacob. 2. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3. Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4. Dan, and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5. And all the souls that came out of the loyns of Jacob, were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already. 6. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. 7. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

In these verses we have, 1. A recital of the names of the twelve patriarchs, as they are called, Acts vii. 9. Their names

are oft repeated in scripture; that they may not sound uncouth to us as other hard names, but that by their occurring so frequently they may become familiar to us: and to shew how precious God's spiritual Israel are to him, and how much he delighteth in them. 2. The account which was kept of the number of Jacob's family when they went down into Egypt: they were in all seventy souls, ver. 5. according to the computation we had, Gen. xlvii. 27. This was just the number of the nations by which the earth was peopled, Gen. x. for when God separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel, as Moses observes, Deut. xxxii. 8. Notice is taken of this here, that their increase in Egypt might appear the more wonderful. Note, It is good for those whose latter end doth greatly increase, often to remember how small their beginning was, Job viii. 7. 3. The death of Joseph, ver. 6. all that generation by degrees wore off: perhaps all Jacob's sons died much about the same time, for there was not past seven years difference in age between the eldest and the youngest of them, except Benjamin; and when death comes into a family, sometimes it makes a full end in a little time; when Joseph, the stay of the family, died, the rest went off apace. Note, We must look upon ourselves and our brethren, and all we converse with as dying, and hastening out of the world. This generation passeth away, as that did which went before.



4. The strange increase of Israel in Egypt, *ver. 7.* Here are four words used to express it, they were fruitful, and increased abundantly, like fishes or insects, so that they multiplied; and being generally healthful and strong, they waxed exceeding mighty, so that they began almost to out-number the natives, for the land was in all places filled with them, at least Goshen, their own allotment. Observe, 1. Tho' no doubt they increased considerably before, yet it should seem it was not till after the death of Joseph that it began to be taken notice of as extraordinary. Thus when they lost the benefit of his protection God made their numbers their defence, and they became better able than they had been to shift for themselves. If God continue our friends and relations to us while we most need them, and remove them, when they can be better spared, let us own he is wise, and not complain that he is hard upon us. After the death of Christ, our Joseph, his Gospel Israel began most remarkably to increase, and his death had an influence upon it, it was like the *sowing of a corn of wheat, which, if it die, bringeth forth much fruit*, John xii. 24. 2. This wonderful increase was the product of the promise long before made unto the fathers: from the call of Abraham, when God first told him he would make of him a great nation, to the deliverance of his seed out of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years, during the first two hundred and fifteen of which, they were increased but to seventy, but in the later half, those seventy multiplied to six hundred thousand fighting men. Note, 1. Sometimes God's providences may seem for a great while to thwart his promises, and to go counter to them, that his people's faith may be tried, and his own power the more magnified. 2. Though the performance of God's promises is sometimes slow, yet it is always sure, *at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie*, Hab. ii. 3.

8. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. 9. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10. Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they joyn also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11. Therefore they did set over them task-masters, to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour. 14. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.

The land of Egypt here at length becomes to Israel a house of bondage, though hitherto it had been a happy shelter and settlement for them. Note, The place of our satisfaction may soon become the place of our affliction, and that may prove the greatest cross to us, of which we said, this same shall comfort us. Those may prove our sworn enemies whose parents were our faithful friends; nay, the same persons that loved us may possibly turn to hate us: therefore cease from man, and say not concerning any place on this side Heaven, this is my rest for ever. Observe here,

1. The obligations they lay under to Israel upon Joseph's account were forgotten, *ver. 8. there arose a new king* (after several successions in Joseph's time) *which knew not Joseph*. All that knew him loved him, and were kind to his relations for his sake; but when he was dead he was soon forgotten, and the remembrance of the good offices he had done was either not retained, or not regarded, nor had it any influence upon their counsels. Note, The best, and the most useful and acceptable services done to men are seldom remembered or recompensed to those that did them, either in their memory, or in their posterity, after their death, *Ecc. ix. 15.* And therefore our great care should be to serve God, and please him who is not unrighteous (whatever men are) to *forget our work and labour of love*, Heb. vi. 10. If we work for men only, our works at furthest will die with us, if for God, they *will follow us*, Rev. xiv. 13. This king of Egypt knew not Joseph, and after him arose one that had the impudence to say, *I know not the Lord*, chap. v. 2. Note, Those that are unmindful of their other benefactors, it is to be feared will forget their great benefactor, 1 *John* iv. 20.

2. Reasons of state were suggested for their dealing hardly with Israel, *ver. 9, 10.* (1.) They are represented as more and mightier than the Egyptians; certainly they were not so. But the king of Egypt, when he resolved to oppress them, would have them thought so, and looked on as a formidable body. (2.) Hence it is inferred, that if care were not taken to keep them under, they would become dangerous to the government, and in time of war would side with their enemies, and revolt from

their allegiance to the crown of Egypt. Note, It has been the policy of persecutors to represent God's Israel as a dangerous people, hurtful to kings and provinces, not fit to be trusted, nay, not fit to be tolerated, that they may have some pretence for the barbarous treatment they design them, *Ezr. iv. 12. Esth. iii. 8.* Observe, the thing they feared was, lest they should get them up out of the land, probably having heard them speak of the promise made to their fathers, that they should settle in Canaan. Note, The policies of the church's enemies aim to defeat the promises of the church's God, but in vain, God's counsels shall stand. (3.) It is therefore proposed that a course be taken to prevent their increase, *Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply*. Note, (1.) The growth of Israel is the grief of Egypt, and that against which the powers and policies of hell are levelled. (2.) When men deal wickedly it is common for them to imagine that they deal wisely, but the folly of sin will at last be manifested before all men.

3. The method they took to suppress them, and check their growth, *ver. 11, 13, 14.* The Israelites behaved themselves so peaceably and inoffensively, that they could not find any occasion of making war upon them, and weakening them by that means; and therefore, 1. They took care to keep them poor by charging them with heavy taxes, which some think is included in the burthens, with which they afflicted them. 2. By this means they took an effectual course to make them slaves; the Israelites it should seem were much more industrious laborious people than the Egyptians, and therefore Pharaoh took care to find them with work, both in his building, they made him treasure-cities, and in his husbandry, even all manner of service in the field: and this was exacted from them with the utmost rigour and severity: here are many expressions used to affect us with this: they had task-masters set over them who were directed not only to burthen them, but as much as might be to afflict them with their burthens, and contrive how to make them grievous. They not only made them serve, which was sufficient for Pharaoh's profit, but they made them serve with rigour, so that their lives became bitter to them; intending hereby, (1.) To break their spirits, and rob them of every thing in them that was ingenious and generous. (2.) To ruin their health and shorten their days, and so diminish their numbers. (3.) To discourage them from marrying, since their children would be born to slavery. (4.) To oblige them to desert the Hebrews, and incorporate themselves with the Egyptians. Thus he hoped to cut off the name of Israel, that it might be no more in remembrance. And it is to be feared the oppression they were under had this ill effect upon them, that it brought over many of them to join with the Egyptians in their idolatrous worships, for we read, *Josh. xxiv. 14.* that they served other Gods in Egypt, and tho' it be not mentioned here in this history, yet we find, *Ezek. xx. 8.* that God had threatened to destroy them for it, even while they were in the land of Egypt: however, they kept a distinct body unmingled with the Egyptians, and by their other customs separated from them, which was the Lord's doing, and marvellous.

4. The wonderful increase of the Israelites, notwithstanding the oppressions they groaned under, *ver. 12. The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied*, solely to the grief and vexation of the Egyptians. Note, 1. Times of affliction have oft been the church's growing times, *Sub pondere crescit*: Christianity spread most when it was persecuted: the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. 2. They that take counsel against the Lord and his Israel do but *imagine a vain thing*, *Psal. ii. 1.* and create so much the greater vexation to themselves: hell and earth cannot diminish those whom Heaven will increase.

15. And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives (of which the name of one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:) 16. And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him, but if it be a daughter, then she shall live. 17. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive. 18. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive? 19. And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women: for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. 20. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied, and waxed very mighty. 21. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses. 22. And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

The Egyptians indignation at Israel's increase, notwithstanding the many hardships they put upon them, drove them at length



length to the most barbarous and inhuman methods of suppressing them, by the murder of their children. It was strange they did not rather pick quarrels with the grown men, against whom they might find some occasion perhaps, but to be thus bloody towards the infants, whom all must own to be innocents, was a sin which they had no cloke for. Note, 1. There is more cruelty in the corrupt heart of man than one would imagine, *Rom. iii. 15, 16.* The enmity that is in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman divests men of humanity itself, and makes them forget all pity. One would not think it possible that ever men should be so barbarous and blood-thirsty, as the persecutors of God's people have been, *Rev. xvii. 6.* 2. Even confessed innocency is no defence against the old enmity: What blood so guiltless as that of the child new born? Yet that is prodigally shed like water, and sucked with delight like milk or honey. Pharaoh and Herod sufficiently proved themselves agents for that great red dragon who stood to devour the man-child as soon as it was born, *Rev. xii. 4.* Pilate delivered Christ to be crucified, after he had confessed that he found no fault in him. It is well for us that man can but kill the body, and that is all.

Two bloody edicts are here signed for the destruction of all the male children that were born to the Hebrews.

1. The midwives were commanded to murder them.

Observe, 1. The orders given them, *ver. 15, 16.* It added much to the barbarousness of the intended executions to make the midwives the executioners, for it was to make them not only bloody but perfidious, and to oblige them to betray a trust, and to destroy those whom they undertook to save and help. Could he think that their sex would admit such cruelty, and their employment such base treachery. Note, Those who are themselves barbarous think to find or make others as barbarous.

Pharaoh's project was secretly to engage the midwives to stifle the men-children as soon as they were born, and then to lay it upon the difficulty of the birth; or some mischance common in that case, *Job iii. 11.* The two midwives he tampered with in order hereunto are here named, and perhaps at this time, which was above eighty years before their going out of Egypt, those two might suffice for all the Hebrew women, at least so many of them as lay near the court, as it is plain by *chap. ii. 5, 6.* many of them did, and of them he was most jealous. They are called Hebrew midwives, probably not because they were themselves Hebrews, for sure Pharaoh could never expect they should be so barbarous to those of their own nation, but because they were generally made use of by the Hebrews, and being Egyptians he hoped to prevail with them. 2. Their pious disobedience to this impious command, *ver. 17, They feared God,* regarded his law, and dreaded his wrath more than Pharaoh's, and therefore saved the men-children alive. Note, (1.) If mens commands be any way contrary to the commands of God we must obey God, and not man, *Acts iv. 19.—v. 29.* No power on earth can warrant us, much less oblige us, to sin against God, our chief Lord. (2.) Where the fear of God rules in the heart, it will preserve it from that snare which the inordinate fear of man brings. 3. Their justifying of themselves in this disobedience, when they were charged with it as a crime, *ver. 18.* they gave a reason for it, which it seems God's gracious providence had furnished them with, that they came too late to do it, for generally the children were born before they came, *ver. 19.* I see no reason we have to doubt of the truth of this; it is plain, they were now under an extraordinary blessing of increase, which may well be supposed to have this effect, that the women had very quick and easy labour, and the mothers and children being both lively, they seldom needed the help of midwives: this these midwives took notice of, and concluding it to be the finger of God, were thereby emboldened to disobey the king in favour to those whom Heaven thus favoured, and with this justified themselves before Pharaoh, when he called them to an account for it. Some of the ancient Jews expound it thus, *Ere the midwife comes at them they pray to their Father in Heaven, and he answereth them, and they do bring forth.* Note, God is a readier help to his people in distress than any other helpers are, and often prevents them with the blessings of his goodness; such deliverances are in a special manner obliging. 4. The recompence God gave them for their tenderness towards his people, *he dealt well with them,* *ver. 20.* Note, God will be behind hand with none for any kindness done to his people, taking it as done to himself. In particular, *he made them houses,* *ver. 21.* built them up into families, blessed their children, and prospered them in all they did. Note, The services done for God's Israel are often repaid in kind. The midwives kept up the Israelites houses, and in recompence for it *God made them houses.* Observe, The recompence has relation to the principle upon which they went, *because they feared God, he made them houses.* Note, Religion and piety is a good friend to outward prosperity: The fear of God in a house will help to build it up, and establish it. Dr. Lightfoot's notion of it is, That for their piety they were married to Israelites, and Hebrew families were built up by them.

2. When this project did not take effect of murdering them clandestinely, he gave public orders to all his people to drown all the male-children of the Hebrews, *ver. 22.* We may suppose it was made highly penal for any to know of the birth of a

son to an Israelite, and not to give information to those who were appointed to throw them into the river. Note, The enemies of the church have been restless in their endeavours to wear out the saints of the most High, *Dan. vii. 25.* But he that sits in Heaven shall laugh at them. See *Psal. cxxix. 1, 2.*

## CHAP. II.

This chapter begins the story of Moses, that man of renown, famed for his intimate acquaintance with Heaven, and his eminent usefulness on earth; and the most remarkable type of Christ, as Prophet, Saviour, Law-giver, and Mediator, in all the Old Testament. The Jews have a book among them, of the life of Moses, which tells a great many stories concerning him, which we have reason to think are meer fictions; what he has recorded concerning himself is what we may rely upon, for we know that his record is true; and it is what we may be satisfied with, for it is what infinite wisdom thought fit to preserve and transmit to us. In this chapter we have, 1. The perils of his birth and infancy, *ver. 1—4.* 2. His preservation through those perils, and the preferment of his childhood and youth, *ver. 5—10.* 3. The pious choice of his riper years, which was to own the people of God. (1.) He offered them his service at present, if they would have accepted it, *ver. 11—14.* (2.) He retired, that he might reserve himself for further service hereafter, *ver. 15—22.* 4. The dawning of the day of Israel's deliverance, *ver. 23—25.*

1. **A**ND there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the rivers brink. 4. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

Moses was a Levite both by father and mother. Jacob left Levi under marks of disgrace, *Gen. xlix. 5.* and yet presently Moses appears a descendant from him, that he might typify Christ who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made a curse for us. By the birth of Moses this tribe began to be distinguished from the rest, as afterwards it was remarkably in many instances. Observe concerning this new-born infant, 1. How he was hid. It seems just at the time of his birth that cruel law was made for the murder of all the male-children of the Hebrews, and many no doubt perished by the execution of it. Moses's parents had Miriam and Aaron, both elder than he, born to them before that edict came out, and had nursed them without that peril, but those that begin the world in peace, know not what troubles they may meet with before they have got through it. Probably, Moses's mother had little joy of her being with child of him, now this edict was in force, and was ready to say, *Blessed are the barren that bear not,* *Luke xxiii. 29.* better so than bring forth children to the murderer, *Hos. ix. 13.* Yet this child proves the glory of his father's house. Thus that which is most our fear, oftentimes proves in the issue most our joy. Observe the beauty of providence: just at the time when Pharaoh's cruelty rose to this height, the deliverer was born, though he did not appear of many years after. Note, When men are projecting the church's ruin, God is preparing for its salvation. And Moses, who was afterwards to bring Israel out of this house of bondage, had himself like to have fallen a sacrifice to the fury of the oppressor, God so ordering it, that being afterwards told of this, he might be the more animated with a holy zeal for the deliverance of his brethren out of the hands of such bloody men.

1. His parents observed him to be a goodly child, more than ordinarily beautiful, he was fair to God, *Acts vii. 20.* they fancied he had a lustre in his countenance that was something more than human, and was a specimen of the shining of his face afterwards, *Exod. xxxiv. 29.* Note, God sometimes gives early earnest of his gifts, and manifests himself betimes in those for whom, and by what, he designs to do great things. Thus he put an early strength into Samson, *Judg. xiii. 24.* an early forwardness into Samuel, *1 Sam. ii. 18.* wrought an early deliverance for David, *1 Sam. xvii. 37.* and began betimes with Timothy, *2 Tim. iv. 15.*

2. Therefore they were the more solicitous for his preservation, because they looked upon this as an indication of some kind purpose of God concerning him, and a happy omen of something great. Note, A very active faith, can take encouragement from the least intimation of the divine favour; a merciful hint of providence will encourage those whose spirits make diligent search. Three months they hid him in some private apartment of their own house, though probably with the hazard of their own lives had he been discovered. Herein Moses was a type of Christ who in his infancy was forced to abscond, and in Egypt too, *Matth. ii. 13.* and was wonderfully preserved when many innocents were butchered. It is said, *Heb. xi. 23,* that Moses's parents hid him



him by faith, some think they had a special revelation to them that the deliverer should spring from their loins; however they had the general promise of Israel's preservation, which they acted faith upon, and in that faith hid their child, not being afraid of the penalty annexed to the king's commandment. Note, 1. Faith in God's promise is so far from superseding, that it rather excites and quickens to the use of lawful means for the obtaining of mercy. Duty is ours, events are God's. 2. Faith in God will set us above the ensnaring fear of man.

2. How he was exposed. At three months end, probably when the searchers came about to look for concealed children, so that they could not hide him any longer, their faith perhaps beginning now to fail, they put him in an ark of bulrushes by the river side, *ver.* 3. and set his little sister at some distance to watch what would become of him, and into whose hands he would fall, *ver.* 4. God put it into their hearts to do this, to bring about his own purposes; that Moses might by this means be brought into the hands of Pharaoh's daughter, and that by his deliverance from this imminent danger, a specimen might be given of the deliverance of God's church, which now lay thus exposed. Note, 1. God takes special care of the out-casts of Israel, *Psal.* cxlvii. 2. they are his out-casts, *Isa.* xvi. 4. Moses seemed quite abandoned by his friends, his own mother durst not own him, but now the Lord took him up and protected him, *Psal.* xxvii. 10. 2. In times of extreme difficulty it is good to venture upon the providence of God. Thus to have exposed their child while they might have preserved it, had been to tempt providence, but when they could not, it was bravely to trust providence. Nothing venture, nothing win, *If I perish, I perish.*

5. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river, and her maidens walked along by the rivers side: and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. 6. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews children. 7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. 9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.

Here is, 1. Moses saved from perishing. Come, see the place where that great man lay, when he was a little child, he lay in a bulrush-basket by the river side. Had he been left to lie there he must have perished in a little time with hunger, if he had not been sooner washed into the river, or devoured by a crocodile: Had he fallen into any other hands than her's, he did fall into, either they would not, or durst not have done otherwise, but have thrown him straightway into the river, but providence brings no less a person thither, than Pharaoh's daughter just at that juncture, guides her to the place where this poor forlorn infant lay, inclines her heart to pity it, which she dares do, when none else durst. Never did poor child cry so seasonably, so happily, as this did, *the babe wept*, which moved the lady's compassion, as no doubt his beauty did, *ver.* 5, 6. Note, (1.) Those are hard-hearted indeed, that have not a tender compassion for helpless infants. God himself represents his compassions by these, *Ezek.* xvi. 5, 6. (2.) It was very commendable in persons of quality to take cognizance of the distresses of the meanest, and to be helpful and charitable to them. (3.) God's care of us in our infancy ought to be often made mention of by us to his praise. Tho' we were not thus exposed, that we were not, was God's mercy, but many were the perils we were surrounded with in our infancy, out of which the Lord delivered us, *Psal.* xxii. 9, 10. (4.) God often raises up friends for his people even among their enemies. Pharaoh cruelly seeks Israel's destruction, but his own daughter charitably compassionates a Hebrew child, and not only so but beyond her intention preserves Israel's deliverer. *O Lord, how wonderful are thy counsels.*

2. Moses well provided with a good nurse, no worse than his own dear mother, *ver.* 7, 8, 9. Pharaoh's daughter thinks it convenient he should have a Hebrew nurse, pity so fair a child should suck the breast of a tawny-more; and Moses's sister, with art and good management, introduces the mother into the place of a nurse, to the great advantage of the child, for mothers are the best nurses, and those who receive the blessings of the breasts with those of the womb, are not just if they give them not to those for whose sake they received them: it was also an unspeakable satisfaction to the mother, who received her son as life from

the dead, and now could enjoy him without fear. The transport of her joy upon this happy turn, we may suppose sufficient to betray her to be the true mother (had there been any suspicion of it) to a less discerning eye than that of Solomon, *1 Kings* iii. 27.

3. Moses preferred to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, *ver.* 10. His parents herein perhaps not only yielding to necessity, having nursed him for her, but too much pleased with the honour thereby done to their son, for the smiles of the world are stronger temptations than its frowns, and more hardly resisted. The tradition of the Jews is that Pharaoh's daughter had no child of her own, and that she was the only child of her father, so that when he was adopted for her son, he stood fair for the crown: however, it is certain he stood fair for the best preferments of the court in due time, and in the mean time had the advantage of the best education and improvements of the court, with the help of which having a great genius, he became master of all the lawful learning of the Egyptians, *Acts* vii. 22. Note, 1. Providence pleaseth itself sometimes in raising the poor out of the dust to set them among princes, *Psal.* cxiii. 7, 8. Many who by their birth seem marked for obscurity and poverty, by surprising events of providence, are brought to sit at the upper end of the world, to make men know that the Heavens do rule. 2. Those whom God designs for great services he finds out ways to qualify and prepare before-hand. Moses by having his education in a court, is the fitter to be a prince, and king in Jehurun; by having his education in a learned court, (for such the Egyptians then was) is the fitter to be an historian: and by having his education in the court of Egypt, is the fitter to be employed as an ambassador to that court in God's name.

4. Moses named. The Jews tell us, that his father at his circumcision called him Joachim, but Pharaoh's daughter called him Moses, *Drawn out of the water*, so it signifies in the Egyptian language. The calling of the Jewish law-giver by an Egyptian name, is a happy omen to the Gentile world, and gives hopes of that day when it should be said, *Blessed be Egypt my people*, *Isa.* xix. 25. And his tuition at court was an earnest of the performance of that promise, *Isa.* xlix. 23. *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.*

11. And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12. And he looked this way and that way; and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13. And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14. And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? and Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known. 15. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

Moses had now passed the first forty years of his life in the court of Pharaoh, preparing himself for business, and now it was time for him to enter upon action, and

1. He boldly owns and espouses the cause of God's people; when Moses was grown he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens, *ver.* 11. The best exposition of these words we have from an inspired pen, *Heb.* xi. 24, 25, 26. where we are told that this speaks, 1. His holy contempt of the honours and pleasures of the Egyptian court, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, for he went out. The temptation was indeed very strong, he had a fair opportunity (as we say) to make his fortunes, and to have been serviceable to Israel too, with his interest at court; he was obliged in gratitude as well as interest to Pharaoh's daughter, and yet he obtained a glorious victory by faith over this temptation. He reckoned it much more his honour and advantage to be a son of Abraham, than to be son of Pharaoh's daughter. 2. His tender concern for his poor brethren in bondage, with whom, (though he might easily have avoided it) he chose to suffer affliction, he looked on their burthens, as one that not only pitied them, but was resolved to venture with them, and if occasion were, to venture for them.

2. He gives a specimen of the great things he was afterwards to do for God and his Israel, in two little instances, related particularly by Stephen, *Acts* vii. 23, &c. with design to shew how their fathers had always resisted the Holy Ghost, (*ver.* 51.) even in Moses himself when he first appeared as their deliverer, wilfully shutting their eyes against this day-break of their enlargement. He found himself (no doubt) under a divine direction and impulse in what he did, and that he was in an extraordinary manner called of God to it. Now observe,

1. Moses was afterwards to be employed in plaguing the Egyptians for the wrongs they had done to God's Israel, and as a specimen of that he killed the Egyptian who smote the Hebrew



brew, *ver.* 11, 12. probably it was one of the Egyptian task-masters, whom he found abusing his Hebrew slave, some think a relation of Moses, of the same tribe. By special warrant from Heaven, (which makes not a precedent in ordinary cases) Moses slew the Egyptian, and rescued his oppressed brother. The Jews tradition is that he did not slay him with any weapon, but as Peter slew Ananias and Sapphira, with the word of his mouth. His hiding him in the sand signified that hereafter Pharaoh and all his Egyptians should, under the controul of Moses's rod, be buried in the sand of the Red-Sea. His taking care to execute this justice privately when no man saw, was a piece of needful prudence and caution, it being but an essay, and perhaps his faith was as yet weak, and what he did was with some hesitation. Those who come to be of great faith, yet began with a little, and at first spake trembling.

2. Moses was afterwards to be employed in governing Israel, and as a specimen of that we have him here trying to end a controversy between two Hebrews, in which he is forced, (as he did afterwards for forty years) to suffer their manners. Observe here,

1. The unhappy quarrel which Moses observes between two Hebrews, *ver.* 13. It doth not appear what was the occasion, but whatever it was, it was certainly very unseasonable for Hebrews to strive with one another, when they were all oppressed and ruled with rigour by the Egyptians. Had they not beating enough from the Egyptians, but they must beat one another? Note, 1. Even sufferings in common do not always unite God's professing people to one another, so much as one might reasonably expect. 2. When God raiseth up instruments of salvation for the church, they will find enough to do not only with oppressing Egyptians to restrain them, but with quarrelsome Israelites to reconcile them.

2. The way he took of dealing with them: he marked him that caused the division, that did the wrong, and mildly reasoned with him, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* The injurious Egyptian was killed, the injurious Hebrew was only reprimanded; for what the former did was from a rooted malice, what the latter did we may suppose was only upon a sudden provocation. The wise God, and according to his example all wise governors make a difference between one offender and another, according to the several qualities of the same offence. Moses endeavoured to make them friends; a good office: thus we find Christ often reproving his disciples scrifes, *Luke ix.* 46.—xxii. 24. for he was a prophet like unto Moses, a healing prophet, a peace-maker, who visited his brethren with a design to slay all enmities. The reproof Moses gave on this occasion may still be of use, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* Note, Smiting our fellows is bad in any, especially in Hebrews; smiting with tongue or hand, either in a way of persecution, or in a way of strife and contention. Consider the person thou smitest, it is thy fellow, thy fellow-creature, thy fellow-christian; it is thy fellow-servant, thy fellow-sufferer: consider the cause; *wherefore* smitest? perhaps it is for no cause at all, or no just cause, or none worth speaking of.

3. The ill success of his attempt, *ver.* 14. *He said, Who made thee a prince?* He that did the wrong thus quarrelled with Moses; the injured party, it should seem, was inclinable enough to peace, but the wrong doer was thus touchy. Note, It is a sign of guilt to be impatient of reproof: and it is many times easier to persuade the injured to bear the trouble of taking wrong, than the injurious to bear the conviction of having *done wrong*, 1 Cor. vi. 7, 8. It was a very wise and mild reproof which Moses gave to this quarrelsome Hebrew, but he cannot bear it, he *kicks against the pricks*, Acts ix. 5. and croileth questions with his reprover.

(1.) He challengeth his authority, *Who made thee a prince?* A man needs no great authority for the giving of a friendly reproof, it is an act of kindness, yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as impetuous and assuming. Thus when people are sick of good discourse, or a seasonable admonition, they will call it preaching, as if a man could not speak a word for God, and against sin, but he *took too much upon him*. Yet Moses was indeed a prince and a judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it, and struck in with him, but they stood in their own light, and *thrust him away*, Acts vii. 25, 27.

(2.) He upbraids him with what he had done in killing the Egyptian, *Intendest thou to kill me?* See what base constructions malice puts upon the best words and actions. Moses for reproving him is presently charged with a design to kill him. An attempt upon his sin was interpreted an attempt upon his life, and it is thought sufficient to justify the suspicion that he had killed the Egyptian, as if Moses made no difference between an Egyptian and a Hebrew. If Moses to right an injured Hebrew had put his life in his hand, and slain an Egyptian, he ought therefore to have submitted to him, not only as a friend to the Hebrews, but as a friend that had more than ordinary power and zeal. But he throws that in his teeth as a crime, which was bravely done, and was intended as a specimen of the promised deliverance; if the Hebrews had taken the hint, and come into Moses as their head and captain, it is likely they had now been delivered, but despising their deliverer, their deliverance was justly deferred, and their

bondage prolonged forty years; as afterwards their despising Canaan, kept them out of it forty years more. *I would, and ye would not.* Note, Men know not what they do, nor what enemies they are to their own interest, when they resist and despise faithful reproofs and reprovers. When the Hebrews strove with Moses, God sent him away into Midian, and they never heard of him of forty years; thus the things that belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes, because *they knew not the day of their visitation*. As to Moses we may look on it as a great damp and discouragement to him. He was now *chusing to suffer affliction with the people of God*, and embracing *the reproach of Christ*, and now at his first setting out to meet with this affliction and reproach from them was a very sore tryal of his resolution. He might have said, If this be the spirit of the Hebrews, I will go to court again, and be the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Note, 1. We must take heed of being prejudiced against the ways and people of God, by the follies and peevishness of some particular persons that profess religion. 2. It is no new thing for the church's best friends, to meet with a great deal of opposition and discouragement in their healing saving attempts, even from their own mothers children. Christ himself *was set at nought by the builders*, and is still rejected by those he would save.

4. Moses's flight to Midian hereupon. The affront given him thus far proved a kindness to him, it gave him to understand that his killing of the Egyptian was discovered, and so he had time to make his escape, otherwise the wrath of Pharaoh might have surprized him, and taken him off. Note, God can over-rule even the strife of tongues, so as one way or other to bring good to his people out of it. Information was brought to Pharaoh, (and it is well if it were not brought by the Hebrew himself whom Moses reproved) of his killing the Egyptian; warrants are presently out for the apprehending of Moses; which obliged him to shift for his own safety by flying into the land of Midian, *ver.* 15. (1.) Moses did this out of a prudent care of his own life. If this be his forsaking of Egypt which the apostle refers to, as done by faith, *Heb.* xi. 27. it teaches us, that when we are at any time in trouble and danger for doing our duty, the grace of faith will be of good use to us in taking proper methods for our own preservation. Yet there it is said, he *feared not the wrath of the king*, here it is said, he *feared*, *ver.* 14. He did not fear with a fear of diffidence and amazement, which weakens and has torment, but with a fear of diligence which quickened him to take that way that providence opened to him, for his own preservation. (2.) God ordered it for wise and holy ends. Things were not yet ripe for Israel's deliverance. The measure of Egypt's iniquity, was not yet full; the Hebrews were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet increased to such a multitude as God designed; Moses is to be farther fitted for the service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present, *till the time to favour Israel, even the set time come*. God guided Moses to Midian, because the Midianites were of the seed of Abraham, and retained the worship of the true God among them, so that he might have not only a safe, but a comfortable settlement among them. And through this country he was afterwards to lead Israel, which, that he might do the better, he now had opportunity of acquainting himself with it. Hither he came, and sat down by a well, tired and thoughtful, at a loss, and waiting to see which way providence would direct him. It was a great change with him, since he was but the other day at ease in Pharaoh's court: thus God tried his faith, and it was found to praise and honour.

16. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their fathers flock. 17. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that you are come so soon to day? 19. And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. 20. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. 21. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Moses here gains a settlement in Midian just as his father Jacob had gained one in Syria, *Gen.* xxix. 2. And both these instances should encourage us to trust providence, and to follow it. Events that seem inconsiderable, and purely accidental, afterwards appear to have been designed by the wisdom of God, for very good purposes, and of great consequence to his people. A casual transient occurrence has sometimes occasioned the greatest and happiest turns of a man's life.

Observe, 1. Concerning the seven daughters of Reuel the priest or prince of Midian. (1.) They were humble, and very industrious,



strious, according as the employment of the country was, they *drew water for their father's flock*, ver. 16. If their father was a prince, it teacheth us, that even those who are honourably born, and are of quality and distinction in their country, yet should apply themselves to some useful business, and what *their hand finds to do, do it with all their might*. Idleness can be no one's honour. If their father was a priest it teaches us, that ministers children should in a special manner be examples of humility and industry. (2.) They were modest, and would not ask this strange Egyptian to come home with them, (tho' handsome and a great courtier) till their father sent for him. Modesty is the ornament of that sex.

2. Concerning Moses; he was taken for an Egyptian, ver. 19. and strangers must be content to be mistaken, but it is observable, 1. How ready he was to help Reuel's daughters to water flocks. Tho' bred in learning and at court, yet he knew how to turn his hand to such an office as this, when there was occasion; nor had he learned of the Egyptians to despise shepherds. Note, Those that have had a liberal education, yet should not be strangers to servile work, because they know not what necessity providence may put them in of working for themselves, or what opportunity providence may give them of being serviceable to others. These young women, it seems, met with some opposition in their employment, more than they and their servants could conquer; the shepherds of some neighbouring prince, as some think, or some idle fellows that called themselves shepherds, *drew away their flocks*; but Moses, tho' melancholy and in distress, *stood up and helped them*, not only to get clear of the shepherds, but when that was done, to water the flocks. This he did not only in complaisance to the ladies, tho' that also did very well become him, but because wherever he was, as occasion offered itself, (1.) He loved to be doing justice, and appearing in the defence of such as he saw injured, which every man ought to do as far as it is in the power of his hand to do it. (2.) He loved to be doing good; wherever the providence of God casts us we should desire and endeavour to be useful; and when we cannot do the good we would, we must be ready to do the good we can. And he that is faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more. 2. How well he was paid for his serviceableness. When the young women acquainted their father with the kindnesses they had received from this stranger, he sent to invite him to his house, and made much of him, ver. 20. Thus God will recompense the kindnesses which are at any time shewn to his children; *they shall in no wise lose their reward*. Moses soon recommended himself to the esteem and good affection of this prince of Midian, who took him into his house, and in process of time married one of his daughters to him, ver. 21. By whom he had a son, whom he called Gershom, a stranger there, (ver. 22.) that if ever God should give him a home of his own, he might keep in remembrance the land in which he had been a stranger. Now this settlement of Moses in Midian was designed by providence, (1.) To shelter him for the present; God will find hiding places for his people in the day of their distress; nay, he will himself be to them a little sanctuary, and will secure them either under Heaven, or in Heaven. But, (2.) It was also designed to prepare him for the great services he was further designed to. His manner of life in Midian, where he kept the flock of his father-in-law, (having none of his own to keep) would be of use to him, (1.) To enure him to hardship, and poverty, that he might learn how to want as well as how to abound. God humbles those first whom he intends to exalt. (2.) To enure him to contemplation, and devotion. Egypt accomplished him for a scholar, a gentleman, a statesman, a soldier, all which accomplishments would be afterwards of use to him, but yet lacketh he one thing, in which the court of Egypt could not befriend him: He that was to do all by divine revelation, must know by a long experience what it was to live a life of communion with God, and in this he would be greatly furthered by the solitude and retirement of a shepherd's life in Midian. By the former he was prepared to rule in Jeshurun, but by the latter he was prepared to converse with God in mount Horeb, near which mount he had spent much of his time. Those that know what it is to be alone with God, in holy exercises, are acquainted with better delights than ever Moses tasted in the court of Pharaoh.

23. And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage. 24. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

Here is, 1. The continuance of the Israelites bondage in Egypt, ver. 23. Probably the murdering of their infants did not continue, that part of their affliction only attended the birth of Moses, to signalize that. And now they were content with their increase, finding that Egypt was enriched by their labour; so they might have them for their slaves, they cared not how many they were.

On this therefore they were intent, to keep them all at work, and make the best hand they could of their labour. When one Pharaoh died another rose up in his place, that was governed by the same maxims, and was as cruel to Israel as his predecessors. If there was sometimes a little relaxation, yet it presently revived again with as much rigour as ever; and probably as the more Israel was oppressed the more they multiplied, so the more they multiplied the more they were oppressed. Note, Sometimes God suffers the rod of the wicked, to lie very long and very heavy on the lot of the righteous. If Moses in Midian at any time began to think how much better his condition might have been, had he staid among the courtiers; he must of himself think this also, how much worse it would have been, if he had had his lot with his brethren; it was a great degrading to him to be keeping sheep in Midian, but better to than making brick in Egypt. The consideration of our brethren's afflictions, would help to reconcile us to our own.

2. The preface to their deliverance at last.

1. They cried, ver. 23. Now at last they began to think of God under their troubles, and to return to him from the idols they had served, *Ezek. xx. 8*. Hitherto they had fretted at the instruments of their trouble, but God was not in all their thoughts. Thus *Hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, they cry not when he binds them*, Job xxxvi. 13. But before God unbound them, he put it into their hearts to cry unto him, as it is explained, *Num. xx. 16*. Note, It is a good sign God is coming towards us with deliverance, when he inclines and enables us to cry to him for it.

2. God heard, ver. 24, 25. To four different expressions of a kind intention towards them, the name of God is here emphatically prefixed. (1.) *God heard their groaning*, i. e. he made it to appear that he took notice of their complaints. The groans of the oppressed cry loud in the ears of the righteous God to whom vengeance belongs; especially the groans of God's spiritual Israel, he knows the burthens they groan under, and the blessings they groan after, and that the blessed Spirit by these groanings, makes intercession in them. (2.) God remembered his covenant, which he seemed to have forgotten, but really is ever mindful of. This God had an eye to, and not to any merit of theirs in what he did for them. See *Lev. xxvi. 42*. (3.) *God looked upon the children of Israel*, Moses looked upon them and pitied them, ver. 21. but now God looked upon them and helped them. (4.) *God had respect unto them*, a favourable respect to them as his own. The frequent repetition of the name of God here, intimates that now we are to expect something great, *Opus Deo dignum*. His eyes which run to and fro through the earth are now fixed upon Israel to shew himself strong, to shew himself a God in their behalf.

### C H A P. III.

*As prophecy had ceased for many ages before the coming of Christ, that the revival and perfection of it in that great prophet might be the more remarkable, so vision had ceased (for ought appears) among the Patriarchs for some ages before the coming of Moses, that God's appearances to him for Israel's salvation might be the more welcome, and in this chapter we have God's first appearance to him in the bush, and the conference between God and Moses in that vision. Here is, 1. The discovery God was pleased to make of his glory to Moses, at the bush, which Moses was forbidden to approach too near to, ver. 1—5. 2. A general declaration of God's grace and good-will to his people, who were beloved for the fathers sakes, ver. 6. 3. A particular notification of God's purpose concerning the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt. 1. He assures Moses it should now be done, ver. 7—9. 2. He gives him a commission to act in it, as his ambassador both to Pharaoh, ver. 10. and to Israel, ver. 16. 3. He answers the objection Moses made of his own unworthiness, ver. 11, 12. 4. He gives him full instructions what to say, both to Pharaoh and to Israel, ver. 13—18. 5. He tells him before-hand what the issue would be, ver. 14—22.*

1. **N**OW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even to Horeb*. 2. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground,



brew, *ver.* 11, 12. probably it was one of the Egyptian taskmasters, whom he found abusing his Hebrew slave, some think a relation of Moses, of the same tribe. By special warrant from Heaven, (which makes not a precedent in ordinary cases) Moses slew the Egyptian, and rescued his oppressed brother. The Jews tradition is that he did not slay him with any weapon, but as Peter slew Ananias and Sapphira, with the word of his mouth. His hiding him in the sand signified that hereafter Pharaoh and all his Egyptians should, under the controul of Moses's rod, be buried in the sand of the Red-Sea. His taking care to execute this justice privately when no man saw, was a piece of needful prudence and caution, it being but an essay, and perhaps his faith was as yet weak, and what he did was with some hesitation. Those who come to be of great faith, yet began with a little, and at first spake trembling.

2. Moses was afterwards to be employed in governing Israel, and as a specimen of that we have him here trying to end a controversy between two Hebrews, in which he is forced, (as he did afterwards for forty years) to suffer their manners. Observe here,

1. The unhappy quarrel which Moses observes between two Hebrews, *ver.* 13. It doth not appear what was the occasion, but whatever it was, it was certainly very unseasonable for Hebrews to strive with one another, when they were all oppressed and ruled with rigour by the Egyptians. Had they not beating enough from the Egyptians, but they must beat one another? Note, 1. Even sufferings in common do not always unite God's professing people to one another, so much as one might reasonably expect. 2. When God raiseth up instruments of salvation for the church, they will find enough to do not only with oppressing Egyptians to restrain them, but with quarrelsome Israelites to reconcile them.

2. The way he took of dealing with them: he marked him that caused the division, that did the wrong, and mildly reasoned with him, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* The injurious Egyptian was killed, the injurious Hebrew was only reprimanded; for what the former did was from a rooted malice, what the latter did we may suppose was only upon a sudden provocation. The wise God, and according to his example all wise governors make a difference between one offender and another, according to the several qualities of the same offence. Moses endeavoured to make them friends; a good office: thus we find Christ often reproving his disciples stripes, *Luke ix. 46.—xxii. 24.* for he was a prophet like unto Moses, a healing prophet, a peace-maker, who visited his brethren with a design to slay all enmities. The reproof Moses gave on this occasion may still be of use, *Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?* Note, Smiting our fellows is bad in any, especially in Hebrews; smiting with tongue or hand, either in a way of persecution, or in a way of strife and contention. Consider the person thou smitest, it is thy fellow, thy fellow-creature, thy fellow-christian; it is thy fellow-servant, thy fellow-sufferer: consider the cause; *wherefore* smitest? perhaps it is for no cause at all, or no just cause, or none worth speaking of.

3. The ill success of his attempt, *ver.* 14. *He said, Who made thee a prince?* He that did the wrong thus quarrelled with Moses; the injured party, it should seem, was inclinable enough to peace, but the wrong doer was thus touchy. Note, It is a sign of guilt to be impatient of reproof: and it is many times easier to persuade the injured to bear the trouble of taking wrong, than the injurious to bear the conviction of having *done wrong*, 1 Cor. vi. 7, 8. It was a very wise and mild reproof which Moses gave to this quarrelsome Hebrew, but he cannot bear it, he *kicks against the pricks*, Acts ix. 5. and crolieth questions with his reprover.

(1.) He challengeth his authority, *Who made thee a prince?* A man needs no great authority for the giving of a friendly reproof, it is an act of kindness, yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming. Thus when people are sick of good discourse, or a seasonable admonition, they will call it preaching, as if a man could not speak a word for God, and against sin, but he *took too much upon him*. Yet Moses was indeed a prince and a judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it, and struck in with him, but they stood in their own light, and *thrust him away*, Acts vii. 25, 27.

(2.) He upbraids him with what he had done in killing the Egyptian, *Intendest thou to kill me?* See what base constructions malice puts upon the best words and actions. Moses for reproving him is presently charged with a design to kill him. An attempt upon his sin was interpreted an attempt upon his life, and it is thought sufficient to justify the suspicion that he had killed the Egyptian, as if Moses made no difference between an Egyptian and a Hebrew. If Moses to right an injured Hebrew had put his life in his hand, and slain an Egyptian, he ought therefore to have submitted to him, not only as a friend to the Hebrews, but as a friend that had more than ordinary power and zeal. But he throws that in his teeth as a crime, which was bravely done, and was intended as a specimen of the promised deliverance; if the Hebrews had taken the hint, and come into Moses as their head and captain, it is likely they had now been delivered, but despising their deliverer, their deliverance was justly deferred, and their

bondage prolonged forty years; as afterwards their despising Canaan, kept them out of it forty years more. *I would, and ye would not.* Note, Men know not what they do, nor what enemies they are to their own interest, when they resist and despise faithful reproofs and reprovers. When the Hebrews strove with Moses, God sent him away into Midian, and they never heard of him of forty years; thus the things that belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes, because *they knew not the day of their visitation*. As to Moses we may look on it as a great damp and discouragement to him. He was now *chusing to suffer affliction with the people of God*, and embracing *the reproach of Christ*, and now at his first setting out to meet with this affliction and reproach from them was a very sore trial of his resolution. He might have said, If this be the spirit of the Hebrews, I will go to court again, and be the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Note, 1. We must take heed of being prejudiced against the ways and people of God, by the follies and peevishness of some particular persons that profess religion. 2. It is no new thing for the church's best friends, to meet with a great deal of opposition and discouragement in their healing saving attempts, even from their own mothers children. Christ himself *was set at nought by the builders*, and is still rejected by those he would save.

4. Moses's flight to Midian hereupon. The affront given him thus far proved a kindness to him, it gave him to understand that his killing of the Egyptian was discovered, and so he had time to make his escape, otherwise the wrath of Pharaoh might have surprized him, and taken him off. Note, God can over-rule even the strife of tongues, so as one way or other to bring good to his people out of it. Information was brought to Pharaoh, (and it is well if it were not brought by the Hebrew himself whom Moses reproved) of his killing the Egyptian; warrants are presently out for the apprehending of Moses; which obliged him to shift for his own safety by flying into the land of Midian, *ver.* 15. (1.) Moses did this out of a prudent care of his own life. If this be his forsaking of Egypt which the apostle refers to, as done by faith, *Heb. xi. 27.* it teaches us, that when we are at any time in trouble and danger for doing our duty, the grace of faith will be of good use to us in taking proper methods for our own preservation. Yet there it is said, he *feared not the wrath of the king*, here it is said, he *feared*, *ver.* 14. He did not fear with a fear of diffidence and amazement, which weakens and has torment, but with a fear of diligence which quickened him to take that way that providence opened to him, for his own preservation. (2.) God ordered it for wise and holy ends. Things were not yet ripe for Israel's deliverance. The measure of Egypt's iniquity, was not yet full; the Hebrews were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet increased to such a multitude as God designed; Moses is to be farther fitted for the service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present, *till the time to favour Israel, even the set time come*. God guided Moses to Midian, because the Midianites were of the seed of Abraham, and retained the worship of the true God among them, so that he might have not only a safe, but a comfortable settlement among them. And through this country he was afterwards to lead Israel, which, that he might do the better, he now had opportunity of acquainting himself with it. Hither he came, and sat down by a well, tired and thoughtful, at a loss, and waiting to see which way providence would direct him. It was a great change with him, since he was but the other day at ease in Pharaoh's court: thus God tried his faith, and it was *found to praise and honour*.

16. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their fathers flock. 17. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. 18. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that you are come so soon to day? 19. And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. 20. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? Why is it that ye have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread. 21. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. 22. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

Moses here gains a settlement in Midian just as his father Jacob had gained one in Syria, *Gen. xxix. 2.* And both these instances should encourage us to trust providence, and to follow it. Events that seem inconsiderable, and purely accidental, afterwards appear to have been designed by the wisdom of God, for very good purposes, and of great consequence to his people. A casual transient occurrence has sometimes occasioned the greatest and happiest turns of a man's life.

Observe, 1. Concerning the seven daughters of Reuel the priest or prince of Midian. (1.) They were humble, and very industrious;



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1. **N**OW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. 2. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground,



ground. 6. Moreover he said, *I am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God.

The years of Moses's life are remarkably divided into three forties, the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh's court, the second, a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun, so changeable is the life of men, especially the life of good men. He had now finished his second forty when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Note, Sometimes it is long before God calls his servants out to that work which of old he designed them for, and has been graciously preparing them for. Moses was born to be Israel's deliverer, and yet not a word is said of it to him, till he is eighty years of age. Now observe,

1. How this appearance of God to him found him employed. He was keeping the flock, that is, tending sheep near mount Horeb, *ver. 1.* This was a poor employment for a man of his parts and education, yet he rests satisfied with it, and thus learns meekness and contentment to a high degree, for which he is more celebrated in sacred writ than for all his other learning. Note, (1.) The calling to which we are called we should therein abide, and not be given to change. (2.) Even those that are qualified for great employments and services, must not think it strange, if they be confined to obscurity; it was the lot of Moses before them, who foresaw nothing to the contrary but that he should die, as he had lived a great while, a poor despicable shepherd. Let those that think themselves buried alive be content to shine like lamps in their sepulchres, and wait till God's time comes for setting them in a candlestick. Thus employed Moses was, when he was honoured with this vision. Note, 1. God will encourage industry. The shepherds were keeping their flocks when they received the tidings of our Saviour's birth, *Luk. ii. 8.* Satan loves to find us idle, God is well-pleased when he finds us employed. 2. Retirement is a good friend to our communion with God. When we are alone the Father is with us. Moses saw more of God in the back-side of a desert, than ever he had seen in Pharaoh's court.

2. What the appearances was: To his great surprize he saw a bush burning, when he perceived no fire either from earth or Heaven to kindle it, and which was more strange, it did not consume, *ver. 2.* It was an angel of the Lord that appeared to him, some think a created angel, who speaks in the language of him that sent him; others, the second person, the angel of the covenant, who is himself Jehovah. It was an extraordinary manifestation of the divine presence and glory; what was visible was produced by the ministry of an angel, but he heard God in it speaking to him.

(1.) He saw a flame of fire, for our God is a consuming fire. When Israel's deliverance out of Egypt was promised to Abraham he saw a burning lamp, which signified the light of joy that deliverance should cause, *Gen. xv. 17.* but now it shines brighter, as a flame of fire, for God in that deliverance brought terror and destruction to his enemies, light and heat to his people, and displayed his glory before all. See *Jsa. x. 17.*

(2.) This fire was not in a tall and stately cedar, but in a bush, a thorny bush, so the word signifies; for God chuseth the weak and despised things of the world, such as Moses, now a poor shepherd, with them to confound the wise; he delights to beautify and crown the humble.

(3.) The bush burned, and yet, was not consumed, an emblem of the church now in bondage in Egypt, burning in the brick-kilns, yet not consumed, *perplexed but not in despair, cast down, but not destroyed.*

3. The curiosity Moses had to enquire into this extraordinary sight, *ver. 3. I will turn aside and see.* He speaks as one inquisitive, and bold in his enquiry, whatever it was, he would, if possible, know the meaning of it. Note, Things revealed belong to us, and we ought diligently to enquire into them.

4. The invitation he had to draw near, yet with a caution, not to come too near, nor rashly. (1.) God gave him a gracious call, to which he returned a ready answer, *ver. 4.* When God saw that he took notice of the burning bush, and turned aside to see it, and left his business to attend it, then God called to him. If he had carelessly neglected it as an *ignis fatuus*, a thing not worth taking notice of, it is likely God had departed and said nothing to him, but when he turned aside God called to him. Note, Those that would have communion with God must attend upon him, and approach to him in those ordinances wherein he is pleased to manifest himself, and his power and glory, though it be in a bush; come to the treasure, though in an earthen vessel. Those that seek God diligently shall find him, and find him their bountiful rewarder. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* God called him by name, Moses, Moses. This which he heard, could not but surprize him much more, than what he saw. The word of the Lord always went along with the glory of the Lord, for every divine vision was designed for divine revelation, *Job. iv. 16.—xxxiii. 14, 15.* Divine calls are then effectual, (1.) When the Spirit of God makes them particular, and calls us by name. The word calls, *He every one*, the Spirit by the applica-

tion of that calls, *Ho such a one! I knew thee by name*, *Exod. xxxiii. 12.* and, (2.) They are then effectual; when we return an obedient answer to them, as Moses here, *Here am I.* *What saith my Lord unto his servant? Here am I*, not only to hear what is said, but to do what I am bidden. (2.) God gave him a needful caution against rashness and irreverence in his approach. 1. He must keep his distance: draw near, but not too near; so near as to hear, but not so near as to pry. His conscience must be satisfied, but not his curiosity; and care must be taken that familiarity do not breed contempt. Note, In all our approaches to God we ought to be deeply affected with that infinite distance that is between us and God, *Eccl. v. ii.* Or, this may be taken as proper to the Old Testament dispensation, which was a dispensation of darkness, bondage, and terror, which the gospel happily frees us from, giving us boldness to enter into the holiest, and inviting us to draw near. 2. He must express his reverence, and his readiness to obey. *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet*, as a servant; the putting off the shoe was then what the putting off of the hat is now, a token of respect, and submission. The ground for the present is holy ground, made so by this special manifestation of the divine presence there, and during the continuance of that, therefore tread not on that ground with dirty shoes. *Keep thy foot*, *Eccl. v. i.* Note, We ought to approach to God with a solemn pause and preparation; and though bodily exercise alone profits little, yet we ought to glorify God with our bodies, and to express our inward reverence, by a grave and reverent behaviour in the worship of God, carefully avoiding every thing that looks light, and rude and unbecoming the awfulness of the service.

5. The solemn declaration God made of his name, by which he would be known to Moses, *ver. 6. I am the God of thy father.*

1. He lets him know, it is God that speaks to him, to engage his reverence and attention, his faith and obedience, for that is enough to command all these, *I am the Lord.* Let us always hear the word, *as the word of God*, *1 Thes. ii. 13.*

2. He will be known as the God of his father, his pious father Amram, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, his ancestors, and the ancestors of all Israel, for whom God was now about to appear. By this God designed, (1.) To instruct Moses in the knowledge of another world, and strengthen his belief of a future state. Thus it is interpreted by our Lord Jesus, the best expositor of scripture, who from hence proves that the dead are raised, against the Sadducees, Moses, saith he, *shewed it at the bush*, *Luk. xx. 37. i. e.* God there shewed it to him, and in him to us, *Mat. xxii. 31.* Abraham was dead, and yet God is the God of Abraham, therefore Abraham's soul lives, to which God stands in relation, and to make his soul compleatly happy, his body must live again in due time. This promise made unto the fathers that God would be their God, must include a future happiness, for he never did any thing for them in this world sufficient to answer the vast extent and compass of that great word, but having prepared for them a city, he is not ashamed to be called their God, *Heb. xi. 16.* and see, *Acts xxvi. 6, 7.—xxiv. 15.* (2.) To assure Moses of the performance of all those particular promises made to the fathers; he may confidently expect that, for by these words it appears God *remembered his covenant*, *chap. ii. 24.* Note, 1. God's covenant relation to us as our God is the best support in the worst of times, and a great encouragement to our faith in particular promises. 2. When we are conscious to ourselves of our own great unworthiness, we may take comfort from God's relation to our fathers, *2 Chr. xx. 6.*

6. The mighty impression this made upon Moses, he hid his face, as one both ashamed and afraid to look upon God. Now he knew it was a divine light, his eyes were dazzled with it; he was not afraid of a burning bush, till he perceived that God was in it. Yea, though God called himself the God of his father, and a God in covenant with him, yet he was afraid. Note, 1. The more we see of God, the more cause we shall see to worship him with reverence and godly fear. 2. Even the manifestations of God's grace and covenant love should increase our humble reverence of him.

7. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows. 8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9. Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.



Now Moses had put off his shoes (for no doubt he observed the orders given him, *ver. 5.*) and covered his face, God enters upon the particular business that was now to be concerted, which was the bringing of Israel out of Egypt. Now after forty years of Israel's bondage, and Moses's banishment, when we may suppose both he and they began to despair, they of being delivered, and he of delivering them; at length the time is come, even the year of the redeemed. Note, God often comes for the salvation of his people then, when they have done looking for him? *Shall he find faith*; Luk. xviii. 8.

Here is, 1. The notice God takes of the afflictions of Israel, *ver. 7, 9. seeing I have seen, not only I have surely seen, but I have strictly observed and considered the matter*: three things God took cognizance of, (1.) *Their sorrows*, *ver. 7.* it is likely they were not permitted to make a remonstrance of their grievances to Pharaoh, nor to seek relief against their task-masters in any of his courts, nor scarce durst complain to one another, but God observed their tears. Note, Even the secret sorrows of God's people are known to him. (2.) *Their cry*, *I have heard their cry*, *ver. 7. it is come unto me*, *ver. 9.* Note, God is not deaf to the cries of his afflicted people. (3.) The tyranny of their persecutors; *I have seen the oppression*, *ver. 9.* Note, As the poorest of the oppressed are not below God's cognizance, so the highest and greatest of their oppressors are not above his check, but he will surely visit for these things.

2. The promise God makes of their speedy deliverance and enlargement, *ver. 8, I am come down to deliver them.* (1.) It notes his resolution to deliver them, and that his heart was upon it, so that it should be done speedily and effectually, and in methods out of the common road of providence; when God doth something very extraordinary he is said to come down to do it, as *Isa. lxiv. 1.* (2.) This deliverance was typical of our redemption by Christ, and in that the eternal Word did indeed come down from Heaven to deliver us. It was his errand into the world. He promises also their happy settlement in the land of Canaan, that they should exchange bondage for liberty, poverty for plenty, labour for rest, and the precarious condition of tenants at will, for the ease and honour of lords proprietors. Note, Whom God, by his grace, delivers out of a spiritual Egypt, he will bring to a heavenly Canaan.

3. The commission he gives to Moses in order hereunto, *ver. 10.* He is not only sent as a prophet to Israel to assure them that they should speedily be delivered, even that had been a great favour, to have one to tell them, how long; but he is sent as an ambassador to Pharaoh to treat with him, or rather as a herald at arms to demand their discharge, and to denounce war in case of refusal; and, as a prince to Israel, to conduct and command them: thus is he taken from *following the ewes great with young*, to a pastoral office much more noble, as David, *Psal. lxxviii. 71.* Note, God is the fountain of power, and the powers that be are ordained of him as he pleaseth. The same hand that now fetched a shepherd out of a desert to be a planter of a Jewish church, afterwards fetched fishermen from their ships to be the planters of the Christian church, *That the excellency of the power might be of God.*

11. And Moses said unto God, *Who am I*, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12. And he said, *Certainly I will be with thee*; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13. And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when I come unto the children of Israel*, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, *What is his name?* What shall I say unto them? 14. And God said unto Moses, *I AM THAT I AM*: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I AM* hath sent me unto you. 15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God Jacob, hath sent me unto you: *this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.*

God having spoken to Moses allows him also a liberty of speech, which he here improves: And,

1. He objects his own insufficiency for the service he was called to, *ver. 11, Who am I?* He thinks himself unworthy of the honour, and unable for the work, not *par negotio*. He thinks he wants courage, and therefore cannot go to Pharaoh to make a demand which might cost the demandant his head: he thinks he wants conduct, and therefore cannot bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt, they are unarmed, undisciplined, quite dispirited, utterly unable to help themselves, it is morally impossible to bring them out. (1.) Moses was incomparably the fittest of any man living for this work, eminent for learning, wisdom, No. v.

experience, valour, faith, holiness, and yet *Who am I?* Note, the more fit any person is for service, commonly the less opinion he has of himself: See *Jud. ix. 8, &c.* (2.) The difficulties of the work were indeed very great, enough to startle the courage and stagger the faith of Moses himself. Note, even wise and faithful instruments may be much discouraged at the difficulties that lie in the way of the church's salvation. (3.) Moses had formerly been very courageous when he slew the Egyptian, but now his heart failed him, for good men are not always alike bold and zealous. (4.) Yet Moses is the man that doth it at last, for God gives grace to the lowly. Modest beginnings are very good presages.

God answers this objection, *ver. 12.* (1.) He promiseth him his presence, *certainly I will be with thee*, and that is enough. Note, those that are weak in themselves yet may do wonders being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: and those that are most diffident of themselves, may be most confident in God. God's presence puts an honour upon the worthless, wisdom and strength into the weak and foolish, makes the greatest difficulties dwindle to nothing, and is enough to answer all objections. (2.) He assures him of success, by the same token, that they should serve God upon this mountain. Note, 1. Those deliverances are most valuable, which open to us a door of liberty to serve God.

2. If God give us opportunity and a heart to serve him, it is a happy and encouraging earnest of further favours designed us.

3. He begs instructions for the executing of his commission, and has them, thoroughly to furnish him.

(1.) He desires to know by what name God would at this time make himself known, *ver. 13.* 1. He supposeth the children of Israel would ask him, *What is his name?* this they would ask, either (1.) To pose Moses: he foresaw difficulty, not only in dealing with Pharaoh to make him willing to part with them, but in dealing with them to make them willing to move. They would be scrupulous and apt to cavil, would bid him produce his commission, and probably this would be the trial. Did he know the name of God? had he the watch-word? Once he was asked, *Who made thee a judge?* then he had not his answer ready, and he would not be balked so again, but would be able to tell in whose name he came. (2.) They would ask this question, for their own information. It is to be feared they were grown very ignorant in Egypt, by reason of their hard bondage, want of teachers, and loss of the sabbath, so that they needed to be told the first principles of the oracles of God. Or, this question, *What is his name?* amounted to an enquiry into the nature of the dispensation they were now to expect: How will God in it be known to us, and what may we depend upon from him? 2. He desires instructions what answer to give them, *What shall I say to them?* What name shall I vouch to them for the proof of my authority? I must have something great and extraordinary to say to them, What must it be? If I must go, let me have full instructions that I may not run in vain. Note, 1. it highly concerns those who speak to people in the name of God to be well prepared before-hand. 2. Those that would know what to say must go to God, to the word of his grace, and to the throne of his grace for instructions, *Ezek. ii. 7.—iii. 4, 10, 17.* 3. Whenever we have any thing to do with God it is desirable to know, and our duty to consider, what is his name.

(2.) God readily gives him full instructions in this matter: two names God would now be known by,

1. A name that speaks what he is in himself, *ver. 14. I am that I am*: This explains his name Jehovah, and signifies, 1. That he is self-existent: he has his being of himself and has no dependence upon any other: the greatest and best man in the world must say, by the grace of God *I am that I am*: but God saith it absolutely, and it is more than any creature, man or angel, can say, *I am that I am*: being self-existent he cannot but be self-sufficient, and therefore all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible fountain of being and bliss. 2. That he is eternal and unchangeable, and always the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever: he will be what he will be, and what he is: see *Rev. i. 10.* 3. That we cannot by searching find him out: this is such a name as checks all bold and curious enquiries concerning God, and in effect saith, *ask not after my name seeing it is wonderful*, *Jud. xiii. 18. Prov. xxx. 4.* Do we ask what is God, let it suffice us to know, that he is what he is, what he ever was and ever will be, *how little a portion is heard of him!* *Job xxvi. 14.* 4. That he is faithful and true to all his promises, unchangeable in his word as well as in his nature, and not a man that he should lie, let Israel know this, *I am hath sent me unto you.*

2. A name that speaks what he is to his people: lest that name *I am* should amaze and puzzle them, he is further directed to make use of another name of God more familiar and intelligible, *ver. 15. The Lord God of your fathers hath sent me unto you.* Thus God had made himself known to him, *ver. 6.* and thus he must make him known to them, 1. That he might revive among them the religion of their fathers, which it is to be feared was much decayed, and almost lost. This was necessary to prepare them for deliverance, *Pf. lxxx. 19.* 2. That he might



might raise their expectations of the speedy performance of the promises made unto their fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are particularly named, because with Abraham the covenant was first made, and with Isaac and Jacob oft expressly renewed, and these three were distinguished from their brethren, and chosen to be the trustees of the covenant when their brethren were rejected. This God will have to be his name for ever, and it has been, is, and will be, his name, by which his worshippers know him, and distinguish him from all false gods: See 1 *Kin.* xviii. 36. Note, God's covenant relation to his people is what he will be ever mindful of, what he glories in, and what he will have us never to forget, but give him the glory of: if he will have this to be his memorial unto all generations, we have all the reason in the world to make it so with us, for it is a precious memorial.

16. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt. 17. And I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and you shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go (we beseech thee) three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 19. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that, he will let you go. 21. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty: 22. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Moses is here more particularly instructed in his work, and informed before-hand of his success.

1. He must deal with the elders of Israel, and raise their expectations of a speedy remove to Canaan, *ver.* 16. 17. He must repeat to them what God had said to him, as a faithful ambassador. Note, that which ministers have received of the Lord they must deliver to his people, and keep back nothing that is profitable: lay an emphasis on that, *ver.* 17. *I have said, I will bring you up*; that is enough to satisfy them, I have said it: and hath he spoken, and will he not make it good? with us saying and doing are two things, but they are not so with God, for he is in one mind, and who can turn him? I have said it, and all the world cannot gainsay it, his counsel shall stand.

His success with the elders of Israel would be good, so he is told, *ver.* 18. *they shall hearken to thy voice*, and not thrust thee away as they did forty years ago: he, who by his grace, inclines the heart, and opens the ear, could say before-hand, *they shall hearken to thy voice*, having determined to make them willing in this day of power.

2. He must deal with the *king of Egypt*, *ver.* 18. (1.) They must not begin with a demand, but with a humble petition; that gentle and submissive method must be first tried, even with one who, it was certain, would not be wrought upon by it, *We beseech thee, let us go.* (2.) They must only beg leave of Pharaoh to go as far as mount Sinai to worship God, and say nothing to him of going quite away to Canaan; that would have been immediately rejected, but this was a very modest and reasonable request, and his denying of it was utterly inexcusable, and justified them in the total deserting of his kingdom. If he would not give them leave to go sacrifice at Sinai, justly did they go without leave to settle in Canaan. Note, The calls and commands God sends to sinners are so highly reasonable in themselves, and delivered to them in such a gentle winning way, as that the mouth of the disobedient must needs be for ever stopped.

As to his success with Pharaoh, he is here told, (1.) That petitions, and persuasions, and humble remonstrances, would not prevail with him, no, nor a mighty hand stretched out in signs and wonders, *ver.* 19, *I am sure he will not let you go.* Note, God sends his messengers to those whose hardness and obstinacy he certainly knows and foresees, that it may appear he would have them turn and live. (2.) That plagues should compel him to it, *ver.* 20, *I will smite Egypt*, and then he will let you go. Note, Those will certainly be broken by the power of God's hand, that will not bow to the power of his word; we may be sure that

when God judgeth he will overcome. (3.) That his people should be more kind to them, and furnish them at their departure with a bundance of plate and jewels, to their great enriching, *ver.* 21, 22. *I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.* Note, (1.) God sometimes makes the enemies of his people not only to be at peace with them, but to be kind to them. (2.) God has many ways of balancing accounts between the injured and the injurious, of righting the oppressed, and compelling those that have done wrong to make restitution, for *he sits in the throne judging right.*

## C H A P. IV.

This chapter (1.) continues and concludes God's discourse with Moses at the bush, concerning this great affair of bringing Israel out of Egypt. 1. Moses objects the peoples unbelief, *ver.* 1. and God answers that objection by giving him a power to work miracles, (1.) To turn his rod into a serpent, and then into a rod again, *ver.* 2—5. (2.) To make his hand leprous and then whole again, *ver.* 6—8. (3.) To turn the water into blood, *ver.* 9. 2. Moses objects his own slowness of speech, *ver.* 10. and begs to be excused, *ver.* 13. But God answers this objection, 1. By promising him his presence, *ver.* 11, 12. 2. By joining Aaron in commission with him, *ver.* 14—16. 3. By putting an honour upon the very staff in his hand, *ver.* 17. (2.) It begins Moses's execution of his commission. 1. He obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt, *ver.* 18. 2. He receives further instructions and encouragements from God, *ver.* 19, 21—23. 3. He hastens his departure, and takes his family with him, *ver.* 20. 4. He meets with some difficulty in the way about the circumcising of his son, *ver.* 24—26. 5. He has the satisfaction of meeting his brother Aaron, *ver.* 27, 28. 6. He produceth his commission before the elders of Israel, to their great joy, *ver.* 29—31. And thus the wheels were set a-going towards that great deliverance.

1. **A**ND Moses answered, and said, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee. 2. And the LORD said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. 3. And he said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent: and Moses fled from before it. 4. And the LORD said unto Moses, put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail: and he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. 5. That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. 6. And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thou thine hand into thy bosom; and he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, Behold his hand was leprous as snow. 7. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again: and he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. 8. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. 9. And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river, shall become blood upon the dry land.

It was a very great honour that Moses was called to, when God commissioned him to bring Israel out of Egypt, yet he is hardly persuaded to accept the commission, and doth it at last with great reluctance, which we should rather impute to a humble diffidence he had of himself, and his own sufficiency, than to any unbelieving distrust of God and his word and power. Note, Those whom God designs for preferment he clothes with humility: the most fit for service are the least forward.

1. Moses objects, that in all probability the people would not hearken to his voice, *ver.* 1. *i. e.* they would not take his bare word, unless he shewed them some sign, which he had not been yet instructed to do. This objection cannot be justified because it contradicts what God had said, chap. iii. 18. *they shall hearken to thy voice.* If God saith they will, doth it become Moses to say they will not? Surely, he means, perhaps they will not at first, or, some of them will not? If there should be some gain-sayers among them, that would question his commission, How should he deal with them? And what course should he take to convince them? He remembered how they had once rejected him, and feared it would be so again. Note, 1. Present discouragements oft arise from former disappointments. 2. Wise and good men have sometimes a worse opinion of people than they deserve: Moses



Moses said, ver. 1. *they will not believe me*, and yet he was happily mistaken, for it is said, ver. 31. *the people believed*; but then the signs which God appointed in answer to this objection were first wrought in their sight.

2. God empowers him to work miracles, directs him to three particularly, two of which were now immediately wrought for his own satisfaction. Note, True miracles are the most convincing external proofs of a divine mission attested by them. Therefore our Saviour oft appealed to his works, as *John* v. 36. and Nicodemus owns himself convinced by them, *John* iii. 2. And here Moses having a special commission given him as a judge and law-giver to Israel has this seal affixed to his commission, and comes supported with these credentials.

1. The rod in his hand is made the subject of a miracle, a double miracle, it is but thrown out of his hand, and it becomes a serpent, he resumes it, and it becomes a rod again, ver. 2, 3, 4. Now, 1. Here was a divine power manifested in the change itself, that a dry stick should be turned into a living serpent, a lively one, so formidable a one that Moses himself, on whom it should seem it turned in some threatening manner, fled from before it; tho' we may suppose, in that desert, serpents were no strange things to him: but what was produced miraculously was always the best and strongest of the kind, as the water turned to wine; and then, that this living serpent should be turned into a dry stick again, this was the Lord's doing. 2. Here was an honour put upon Moses, that this change was wrought upon his throwing it down and taking it up, without any spell, or charm, or incantation: his being empowered thus to act under God, out of the common course of nature and providence, was a demonstration of his authority under God to settle a new dispensation of the kingdom of grace. We cannot imagine that the God of truth would delegate such a power as this to an impostor. 3. There was a significance in the miracle itself; Pharaoh had turned the rod of Israel into a serpent, representing them as dangerous, chap. i. 10. causing their belly to cleave to the dust, and seeking their ruin, but now they should be turned into a rod again: or, thus Pharaoh had turned the rod of government into the serpent of oppression, from which Moses had himself fled into Midian, but by the agency of Moses the scene was altered again. 4. There was a direct tendency in it to convince the children of Israel that Moses was indeed sent of God to do what he did, ver. 5. Miracles were for signs to them that believed not, 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

2. His hand itself is next made the subject of a miracle; he puts it once into his bosom, and takes it out leprous; he puts it again into the same place, and takes it out well, ver. 6, 7. This signified, 1. That Moses, by the power of God, should bring fore diseases upon Egypt, and that at his prayer they should be removed. 2. That whereas the Israelites in Egypt were become leprous, polluted by sin, and almost consumed by oppression (a leper is *as one dead*, Num. xii. 12.) by being taken into the bosom of Moses they should be cleansed and cured, and all their grievances redressed. 3. That Moses was not to work miracles by his own power, nor for his own praise, but by the power of God, and for his glory; the leprous hand of Moses doth for ever exclude boasting. Now it is supposed if the former sign did not convince this latter would. Note, God is willing more abundantly to shew the truth of his word, and is not sparing in his proofs; the multitude and variety of the miracles corroborate the evidence.

3. He is directed, when he should come to Egypt, to turn some of the water of the river into blood, ver. 9. This was done at first as a sign, but, not gaining due credit with Pharaoh, the whole river was afterwards turned into blood, and then it became a plague. He is ordered to work this miracle, in case they would not be convinced by the other two. Note, Unbelief shall be left inexcusable, and convicted of a wilful obstinacy. As to the people of Israel God had said, chap. iii. 18. *they shall hearken*, yet he appoints these miracles to be wrought for their conviction, for he that has ordained the end, has ordained the means.

10. And Moses said unto the LORD, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. 11. And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the LORD? 12. Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. 13. And he said, O my LORD, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. 14. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. 15. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. 16. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the peo-

ple: and he shall be, *even* he shall be to thee in stead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him in stead of God. 17. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.

Moses still continues backward to the service God had designed him for, even to a fault; for now we can no longer impute it to his humility and modesty, but must own that there was too much of cowardice, slothfulness, and unbelief, in it. Observe here,

1. How Moses endeavours to excuse himself from the work.

(1.) He pleads, that he was no good spokesman, ver. 10. *O my Lord, I am not eloquent*: he was a great philosopher, statesman and divine, and yet no orator; a man of a clear head, great thought, and solid judgment, but had not a voluble tongue, or ready utterance, and therefore he thought himself unfit to speak before great men, about great affairs, and in danger of being run down by the Egyptians. Observe, 1. We must not judge of men by the readiness and fluency of their discourse; Moses was *mighty in word*, Acts vii. 21. and yet not eloquent: what he said was strong and nervous, and to the purpose, and distilled as the dew, *Deut.* xxxii. 2. tho' he did not deliver himself with that readiness, ease, and fineness, that some do who have not the tenth part of his sense; St Paul's speech was contemptible, 2 Cor. x. 10. A great deal of wisdom and true worth is concealed by a slow tongue. 2. God is pleased sometimes to make choice of those as his messengers, who have least of the advantages of art or nature, that his grace in them may appear the more glorious; Christ's disciples were no orators till the Spirit made them so.

(2.) When that plea was over-ruled, and all his excuses were answered, he begged that God would send some one else on this errand, and leave him to keep sheep in Midian, ver. 13. send by any hand but mine; thou canst certainly find one much more fit. Note, An unwilling mind will take up with a sorry excuse rather than none, and is willing to devolve those services upon others that have any thing of difficulty or danger in them.

2. How God condescends to answer all his excuses: though *the anger of the Lord was kindled against him*, ver. 14. yet he continued to reason with him till he had overcome him. Note, 1. Even self-diffidence when it grows into an extreme, when it either hinders us from duty, or clogs us in duty, or discourageth our dependence upon the grace of God, is very displeasing to him: God justly resents our backwardness to serve him, and has reason to take it ill, for he is such a benefactor as is before-hand with us, and such a rewarder as will not be behind-hand with us. 2. God is justly displeased with those whom yet he doth not reject: he vouchsafes to reason the case even with his froward children, and overcomes them, as he did Moses here, with grace and kindness.

1. To balance the weakness of Moses, he here minds him of his own power, ver. 11. (1.) His power in that concerning which Moses made the objection, *Who has made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord?* Moses knew that God made man, but he must be minded now, that *God made man's mouth*: an eye to God as Creator would help us over a great many of the difficulties which lie in the way of our duty, *Psal.* cxxiv. 8. God, as the author of nature, has given us the power and faculty of speaking, and as the fountain of gifts and graces, from him comes the faculty of speaking well, *the mouth and wisdom*, Luke xxi. 15. *the tongue of the learned*, Isa. l. 4. *he pours grace into the lips*, *Psal.* xlv. 2. (2.) His power in general over the other faculties, *Who but he makes the dumb and the deaf, the seeing and the blind?* 1. The perfections of our faculties are his work, he makes the seeing; he formed the eye, *Psal.* xciv. 7. he opens the understanding, the eye of the mind, *Luke* xxiv. 45. 2. Their imperfections are from him too; he makes the dumb, and deaf, and blind. Is there any evil of this kind, and the Lord has not done it? No doubt he has, and always in wisdom and righteousness, and for his own glory, *John* ix. 3. Pharaoh and the Egyptians were made deaf and blind spiritually, as *Isa.* vi. 9, 10. But God knew how to manage them, and get himself honour upon them.

2. To encourage him in this great undertaking he repeats the promise of his presence, not only in general, *I will be with thee*, chap. iii. 12. but in particular, *I will be with thy mouth*; so that the imperfection in thy speech shall be no prejudice to thy message. It doth not appear, that God did presently remove the infirmity, whatever it was, but he did that which was equivalent, he taught him what to say, and then let the matter recommend itself: if others spoke more gracefully, none spoke more powerfully. Note, Those whom God employs to speak for him, ought to depend upon him for instructions, and *it shall be given them what they shall speak*, Matth. x. 19.

3. He joins Aaron in commission with him: he promiseth that Aaron should meet him opportunely, and that he would be glad to see him, they having not seen one another (it is likely) of many years, ver. 14. He directs him to make use of Aaron as his spokesman, ver. 16. God might have laid Moses wholly aside for his backwardness to be employed, but he considered his frame, and ordered him an assistant. Observe, 1. That two are better than one, *Eccl.* iv. 9. God will have his *two witnesses*, Rev. xi. 3. that out of their mouth every word may be established. 2. Aaron



Aaron was the brother of Moses, divine wisdom so ordering it, that their natural affection one to another might strengthen their union in the joint execution of their commission. Christ sent his disciples two and two, and some of the couples were brothers. 3. Aaron was the elder brother, and yet he was willing to be employed under Moses in this affair, because God would have it so. 4. Aaron could speak well, and yet was far inferior to Moses in wisdom: God dispenseth his gifts variously to the children of men, that we may see our need one of another, and each may contribute something to the *good of the body*, 1 Cor. xii. 21. The tongue of Aaron with the head and heart of Moses would make one completely fit for this embassy. 5. God promiseth, *I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth*. Even Aaron that could speak well, yet could not speak to purpose, unless God were with his mouth; without the constant aids of divine grace the best gifts will fail.

4. He bids him take the rod with him in his hand, *ver. 17*, to intimate, that he must bring about his undertaking rather by acting than by speaking; the signs he should work with this rod might abundantly supply the want of eloquence; one miracle would do him better service than all the Rhetoric in the world. Take this rod, the rod he carried as a shepherd, that he might not be ashamed of that mean condition out of which God called him. This rod must be his staff of authority, and must be to him instead both of sword and sceptre.

18. And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said to him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren, which *are* in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace. 19. And the LORD said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. 20. And Moses took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. 21. And the LORD said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see *that* thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22. And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh: Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my son, *even* my first-born. 23. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: And if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, *even* thy first-born.

Here, 1. Moses obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt, *ver. 18*. His father-in-law had been kind to him when he was a stranger, and therefore he would not be so uncivil as to leave his family, nor so unjust as to leave his service without giving him notice. Note, The honour of being admitted into communion with God, and employed for him, doth not discharge us from the duties of our relations and callings in this world. Moses said nothing to his father-in-law (for ought appears) of the glorious appearance of God to him; such favours we are to be thankful for to God, but not to boast of before men.

2. He receives from God further encouragements and directions in his work: after God had appeared to him in the bush to settle a correspondence, it should seem he often spake to him as there was occasion, with less of solemnity: And,

1. He assures Moses that the coasts were clear: whatever new enemies he might make by this undertaking, his old enemies were *all dead, all that sought his life*, *ver. 19*. Perhaps some secret fear of falling into their hands was at the bottom of Moses's backwardness to go to Egypt, though he was not willing to own it, but pleaded unworthiness, insufficiency, want of elocution, &c. Note, God knows all the temptations his people lie under, and how to arm them against their secret fears, *Psal. cxlii. 3*.

2. He orders him to do the miracles, not only before the elders of Israel, but before Pharaoh, *ver. 21*. There were some alive perhaps in the court of Pharaoh, who remembered Moses when he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and had many a time called him a fool for deserting the honours of that relation; but he is now sent back to court, clad with greater powers than Pharaoh's daughter could have advanced him to, so that it might appear he was no loser by his choice: this wonder-working rod did more adorn the hand of Moses, than the scepter of Egypt could have done. Note, Those that look with contempt upon worldly honours, shall be recompensed with the honour that cometh from God, which is the true honour.

3. That Pharaoh's obstinacy might be no surprize or discouragement to him, God tells him before that he would *harden his heart*. Pharaoh had hardened his own heart against the groans and cries of the oppressed Israelites, and shut up the bowels of his compassion from them, and now God, in a way of righteous judgment, hardens his heart against the conviction of the miracles, and the terror of the plagues. Note, Ministers must expect with many to labour in vain: we must not think it strange if we meet with those who will not be wrought upon by the strongest arguments, and fairest reasonings, yet our judgment is with the Lord.

4. Words are put into his mouth wherewith to address to Pharaoh, *ver. 22, 23*. God had promised him, *ver. 12*. *I will teach thee what thou shalt say*, and here he doth teach him. (1.) He must deliver his message in the name of the great Jehovah, *Thus saith the Lord*; this is the first time that preface is used by any man, which afterwards is used so frequently by all the prophets: whether Pharaoh will hear, or whether he will forbear, Moses must tell him, *Thus saith the Lord*. (2.) He must let Pharaoh know Israel's relation to God, and God's concern for Israel. *Is Israel a servant, is he a home-born slave?* *Jer. ii. 14*. No, *Israel is my son my first born; precious in my sight, honourable, and dear to me, not to be thus insulted and abused*. (3.) He must demand a discharge for them, let my son go, not only my servant whom thou hast no right to detain, but my son whose liberty and honour I am very jealous for. It is my son, my son that serves me, and therefore must be spared, must be pleaded for, *Mal. iii. 17*. (4.) He must threaten Pharaoh with the death of the first-born of Egypt, in case of a refusal, *I will slay thy son, even thy first-born*. As men deal with God's people, let them expect so to be themselves dealt with, with the froward he will wrestle.

3. Moses addresseth himself to this expedition; when God had assured him, *ver. 19*, that the men were dead which sought his life, immediately it follows, *ver. 20*, he *took his wife, and his sons*, and set out for Egypt. Note, Tho' corruption may object much against the services God calls us to, yet grace will get the upper hand, and will be obedient to the heavenly vision.

24. And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him. 25. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband *art* thou to me. 26. So he let him go: Then she said, A bloody husband *thou art*, because of the circumcision. 27. And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness, to meet Moses. And he went and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. 28. And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD, who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him. 29. And Moses and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30. And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. 31. And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Moses is here going to Egypt, and we are told,

1. How God met him in anger, *ver. 24, 25, 26*. This is a very difficult passage of story; much has been written, and excellently well, to make it intelligible, we will try to make it improveable. Here is, 1. The sin of Moses, which was neglecting to circumcise his son, which perhaps was the effect of his being unequally yoked with a Midianite, who was too indulgent of her child, and Moses so of her. Note, (1.) We have need to watch carefully over our own hearts lest fondness of any relation prevail above our love to God, and take us off from our duty to him. It is charged upon Eli, that he *honoured his sons more than God*, 1 Sam. ii. 29. and see *Mat. x. 37*. (2.) Even good men are apt to cool in their zeal for God and duty, when they have long been deprived of the society of the faithful: solitude has its advantages, but they seldom balance the loss of Christian communion. 2. God's displeasure against him: He met him, and probably by a sword in an angel's hand sought to kill him. This was a great change; very lately God was conversing with him, and lodging a trust in him as a friend, and now coming forth against him as an enemy. Note, (1.) Omissions are sins, and must come into judgment, and particularly the contempt and neglect of the seals of the covenant; for it is a sign we undervalue the promises of the covenant, and are displeased with the conditions of it. He that has made a bargain, and is not willing to seal and ratify it, one may justly suspect he neither likes it, nor designs to stand to it. (2.) God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sins of his own people; if they neglect their duty let them expect to hear of it by their consciences, and perhaps to feel from it by cross providences; for this cause many are sick and weak, as some think Moses was here. 3. The speedy performance of the duty, for the neglect of which God had now a controversy with him. His son must be circumcised, he is disabled to do it, therefore in this case of necessity Zipporah doth it, whether with passionate words expressing her dislike of the ordinance itself, or at least the administration of it to so young a child, and in a journey (as to me it seems); or, with proper words solemnly expressing the espousal of the child to God by the covenant of circumcision, as some read it, or her thankfulness to God for sparing her husband, giving him a new life, and thereby giving her, as it were, a new marriage to him, upon her circumcising her son, as others read it,



it, I cannot determine: but we learn, 1. That when God discovers to us what is amiss in our lives, we must give all diligence to amend it speedily, and particularly return to the duties we have neglected. 2. The putting away of our sins is indispensably necessary to the removal of God's judgments: this is the voice of every rod, it calls us to return to him that smiteth us. 3. The release of Moses thereupon, *so he let him go*: the distemper went off, the destroying angel withdrew, and all was well; only Zipporah cannot forget the fright she was in, but will unreasonably call Moses, a bloody husband, because he obliged her to circumcise the child: and upon this occasion (it is probable) he sent them back to his father-in-law, that they might not create him any further uneasiness. Note, 1. When we return to God in a way of duty, he will return to us in a way of mercy; take away the cause, and the effect will cease. 2. We must resolve to bear it patiently, if our zeal for God and his institutions be misinterpreted and discouraged by some that should understand themselves, and us, and their duty better, as David's by Michal: but if this be to be vile, if this be to be bloody, we must be yet more so. 3. When we have any special service to do for God, we should remove that as far from us as we can, which is likely to be our hindrance, *let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me*.

2. How Aaron met him in love, *ver. 27, 28*. (1.) God sent Aaron to meet him, and directed him where to find him, in the wilderness that lay towards Midian. Note, The providence of God is to be acknowledged in the comfortable meeting of relations and friends. (2.) Aaron made so much haste, in obedience to his God, and in love to his brother, that he met him in the mount of God, the place where God had met with him. (3.) They embraced one another with mutual endearments; the more they saw of God's immediate direction in bringing them together, the more pleasant their interview was: they kissed, not only in token of brotherly affection, and in remembrance of ancient acquaintance, but as a pledge of their hearty concurrence in the work they were jointly called to. (4.) Moses informed his brother of the commission he had received, with all the instructions and credentials affixed to it, *ver. 28*. Note, What we know of God we should communicate for the benefit of others; and those that are fellow servants to God in the same work should use a mutual freedom, and endeavour, rightly and fully, to understand one another.

3. How the elders of Israel met him in faith and obedience: when Moses and Aaron first opened their commission in Egypt, said what they were ordered to say, and, to confirm that, did what they were ordered to do; they met with better acceptance than they promised themselves, *ver. 29, 30, 31*. (1.) The Israelites gave credit to them; the people believed, as God had foretold, *chap. iii. 18*. knowing that no man could do these works that they did, unless God were with him. (2.) They gave glory to God, they bowed their heads and worshipped, therein expressing not only their humble thankfulness to God, who had raised them up and sent them a deliverer, but also their cheerful readiness to observe orders, and pursue the methods of their deliverance.

## C H A P. V.

*Moses and Aaron are here dealing with Pharaoh, to get leave of him to go worship in the wilderness.*

1. They demand leave in the name of God, *ver. 1*. and he answers their demand with a defiance of God, *ver. 2*.
2. They beg leave in the name of Israel, *ver. 3*. and he answers their request with further orders to oppress Israel, *ver. 4—9*. These cruel orders were, 1. executed by the task-masters, *ver. 10—14*. 2. Complained of to Pharaoh, but in vain, *ver. 15—19*. 3. Complained of by the people to Moses, *ver. 20, 21*. and by him to God, *ver. 22, 23*.

1. **A**ND afterwards Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. 2. And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.

Moses and Aaron having delivered their message to the elders of Israel, with whom they found good acceptance, are now to deal with Pharaoh, to whom they come in peril of their lives: Moses particularly, who perhaps was out-lawed for killing the Egyptian forty years before, and if any of the old courtiers should happen to remember that against him now, that might have cost him his head; however, the message itself was displeasing, and touched Pharaoh both in his honour and in his profit, two tender points; yet these faithful ambassadors boldly deliver their errand, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear.

1. Their demand is piously bold, *ver. 1*. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go: Moses, in treating with the elders

of Israel, is directed to call God the God of their fathers, but in treating with Pharaoh they call him the God of Israel, and it is the first time we find him called so in scripture: he is called the God of Israel, the person, *Gen. xxxiii. 20*. but here it is Israel, the people. They are just beginning to be formed into a people, when God is called their God. Moses it is likely was directed to call him so, at least it might be inferred from *chap. iv. 22*. *Israel is my son*. In this great name they deliver their message, *Let my people go*. (1.) They were God's people, and therefore Pharaoh ought not to detain them in bondage. Note, God will own his own people, tho never so poor and despicable, and will find a time to plead their cause. The Israelites are slaves in Egypt, but they are my people saith God, and I will not suffer them to be always trampled upon: See *Iſa. lii. 4, 5*. (2.) He expected services and sacrifices from them, and therefore they must have leave to go where they could freely exercise their religion, without giving offence to, or receiving offence from, the Egyptians. Note, God delivers his people out of the hand of their enemies that they may serve him, and serve him cheerfully; that they may hold a feast to him; which they may do while they have his favour and presence, even in a wilderness, a dry and barren land.

2. Pharaoh's answer is impiously bold, *ver. 2*. *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?* Being summoned to surrender he thus hangs out the flag of defiance, hectors Moses and the God that sends him; and peremptorily refuseth to let Israel go, he will not treat about it, nor so much as bear the mention of it.

Observe, 1. How scornfully he speaks of the God of Israel, Who is Jehovah? I neither know him nor care for him; neither value him nor fear him; it is a hard name that he never heard of before, but he resolves it shall be no bug-bear to him. Israel was now a despised oppressed people, looked on as the tail of the nation, and by the character they bore he makes his estimate of their God, and concludes that he made no better a figure among the gods, than his people did among the nations. Note, (1.) Hardened persecutors are more malicious against God himself than they are against his people: see *Iſa. xxxvii. 23*. (2.) Ignorance and contempt of God are at the bottom of all the wickedness that is in the world. Men know not the Lord, or have very low and mean thoughts of him, and therefore they obey not his voice, nor will let any thing go for him.

2. How proudly he speaks of himself, *that I should obey his voice*; I the king of Egypt, a great people, obey the God of Israel, a poor enslaved people? shall I that rule the Israel of God obey the God of Israel? No, it is below me, I scorn to answer his summons. Note, They are the *children of pride*, that are the *children of disobedience*, *Job xli. 34*. *Eph. v. 6*. Proud men think themselves too good to stoop even to God himself, and would not be under controul, *Fer. xliii. 2*. Here is the core of the controversy, God must rule, but man will not be ruled: I will have my will done, saith God, but I will do my own will, saith the sinner.

3. How resolutely he denies the demand, *neither will I let Israel go*. Note, Of all sinners none are so obstinate, nor so hardly persuaded to leave their sin as persecutors are.

3. And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. 4. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens. 5. And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and you make them rest from their burdens. 6. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying, 7. Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8. And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them; you shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they be idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. 9. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.

Finding that Pharaoh had no veneration at all for God, next they try whether he had any compassion for Israel, and become humble suitors to him for leave to go sacrifice, but in vain.

1. Their request is very humble and modest, *ver. 3*. They make no complaint of the rigour they were ruled with; they plead that this journey designed was not a project formed among themselves, but their God had met with them, and called them to it; they beg with all submission, *we pray thee*; the poor useth intreaties: though God may summon princes that oppress, it becomes us to beseech and make supplication to them. What they ask is very reasonable, only for a short vacation, while they went three days journey into the desert, and that on a good errand, and unexceptionable, we will sacrifice to the Lord our God, as other people do to theirs; and (lastly) they give a very good reason.



reason, left if we quite cast off his worship he fall upon us with one judgment or other, and then Pharaoh will lose his vassals.

2. Pharaoh's denial of their request is very barbarous and unreasonable, *ver.* 4—9. (1.) His suggestions were very unreasonable; 1. That the people were idle, and that therefore they talked of going to sacrifice. The cities they built for Pharaoh, and other the fruit of their labours were witnesses for them that they were not idle; yet he thus basely misrepresents them, that he might have a pretence to increase their burdens. 2. That Moses and Aaron made them idle with *vain words*, *ver.* 9. God's words are here called vain words; and those that called them to the best and most needful business are accused as making them idle. Note, The malice of Satan has oft represented the service and worship of God, as fit employment for those only that have nothing else to do, and the business only of the idle, whereas indeed it is the indispensable duty of those that are most busy in the world. (2.) His resolutions hereupon were most barbarous: 1. Moses and Aaron themselves must get to *their burthens*, *ver.* 4. they are Israelites, and however God had distinguished them from the rest, Pharaoh makes no difference they must share in the common slavery of their nation. Persecutors have always taken a particular pleasure in putting contempt and hardship upon the ministers of the churches. 2. The usual tale of bricks must be exacted, without the usual allowance of straw, to mix with the clay, or to burn them with; that thus more work might be laid upon the men, which if they performed they would be broken with labour, and if not they would be exposed to punishment.

10. And the task-masters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw. 11. Go ye, get you straw where you can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished. 12. So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw. 13. And the task-masters hastened *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw. 14. And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's task-masters had set over them, were beaten, and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and to day, as heretofore?

Pharaoh's orders are here put in execution; straw is denied, and yet the work not diminished. 1. The Egyptian task-masters were very severe. Pharaoh having decreed unrighteous decrees, the task-masters were ready to write the grievousness that he had prescribed, *Isa.* x. 1. Cruel princes will never want cruel instruments to be employed unto them, who will justify them in that which is most unreasonable. These task-masters insisted upon the daily tasks, *as when there was straw*, *ver.* 13. See what need we have to pray that we may be delivered from *wicked and unreasonable men*, *2 Thes.* iii. 2. The enmity of the serpent's seed against the seed of the woman is such as breaks through all the laws of reason, honour, humanity, and common justice. 2. The people hereby were dispersed throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble, *ver.* 12. By this means Pharaoh's unjust and barbarous usage of them came to be known to all the kingdom, and perhaps caused them to be pitied by their neighbours, and made Pharaoh's government less acceptable even to his own subjects: good-will is never got by persecution. 3. The Israelite officers were especially abused, *ver.* 14. They that were the fathers of the houses of Israel paid dear for their honour, for from them immediately the service was exacted, and they were beaten when it was not performed. See here, 1. What a miserable thing slavery is, and what reason we have to be thankful to God for it, that we are a free people, and not oppressed: liberty and property are valuable jewels in the eyes of those, whose services and possessions lie purely at the mercy of an arbitrary power. 2. What disappointments we often meet with after the raising of our expectations. The Israelites were now lately encouraged to hope for enlargement; but behold greater distresses: This teaches us always to rejoice with trembling. 3. What strange steps God sometimes takes in delivering his people; he often brings them to the utmost straits then, when he is just ready to appear for them. The lowest ebbs go before the highest tides; and very cloudy mornings commonly introduce the fairest days, *Deut.* xxxii. 36. God's time to help is when things are at the worst, and providence verifies the paradox, *The worse the better.*

15. Then the officers of the children of Israel, came and cried unto Pharaoh, saying, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy servants? 16. There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick: and behold, thy servants *are* beaten; but the fault is in thine own people. 17. But he said, Ye *are* idle, ye *are* idle: therefore ye say, Let us go, *and* do sacrifice to the LORD. 18. Go therefore now *and* work: for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale

of bricks. 19. And the officers of the children of Israel did see *that* they *were* in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not minish *ought* from your bricks of your daily task. 20. And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh. 21. And they said unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; because you have made our favour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hands to slay us. 22. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou *so* evil intreated this people? why is it *that* thou hast sent me? 23. For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all.

It was a great strait that the head-workmen were in, when they must either abuse those that were under them, or be abused by those that were over them, yet it should seem rather than they would tyrannize, they would be tyrannized over; and they were so. In this evil case, *ver.* 19. Observe,

1. How justly they complained to Pharaoh; they came and cried unto Pharaoh (*ver.* 15.) whether else should they go with a remonstrance of their grievances, but to the supreme power which is ordained for the protection of the injured: as bad as Pharaoh was, his oppressed subjects had liberty to complain to him; there was no law against petitioning: it was a very modest but moving representation they made of their condition, *ver.* 16. *Thy servants are beaten* (severely enough, no doubt, when things were in such a ferment) and yet, *the fault is in thine own people*, the task-masters, who deny us what is necessary for carrying on our work. Note, It is common for those to be most vigorous in blaming others, who are most blame-worthy themselves.

But what did they get by this complaint? It did but make ill worse; (1.) Pharaoh taunted them, *ver.* 17. when they were almost killed with working, he told them they were idle: they underwent the fatigue of industry, and yet lay under the imputation of slothfulness, and yet nothing appeared but this to ground the charge upon, they said, *Let us go, and do sacrifice*. Note, It is common for the best actions to be put under the worst characters; holy diligence in the best business is censured by many as a culpable carelessness in the business of the world. It is well for us that men are not to be our judges, but a God who knows what the principles are we go upon. Those that are diligent in doing sacrifice to the Lord, will with God escape the doom of the slothful servant, though with men they do not. (2.) He bound on their burthens, *Go now and work*, *ver.* 18. Note, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked; What can be expected from unrighteous men, but more unrighteousness?

2. How unjustly they complained of Moses and Aaron, *ver.* 21, *The Lord look upon you, and judge*: This was not fair, Moses and Aaron had given sufficient evidence of their hearty good-will to the liberties of Israel, and yet because things succeed not presently so as they are hoped, they are reproached as accessaries to their slavery. They should have humbled themselves before God, and taken to themselves the shame of their sin, which *turned away good things from them*; but instead of that, they fly in the face of their best friends, and quarrel with the instruments of their deliverance, because of some little difficulties and obstructions they meet with in it. Note, Those that are called out to publick service for God and their generation, must expect to be tried, not only by the malicious threats of proud enemies, but by the unjust and unkind censures of unthinking friends who judge only by outward appearance, and look but a little way before them.

Now what did Moses do in this strait? It grieved him to the heart, that the event did not answer, but rather contradict his expectation; and their upbraidings were cutting and like a sword in his bones; but,

1. He returned to the Lord, (*ver.* 22.) to acquaint him with it, and to represent the case to him: he knew that what he had said and done was by divine direction, and therefore what blame is laid upon him for it, he looks upon as reflecting upon God, and, like Hezekiah, spreads it before him as interested in the cause, and appeals to him: Compare this with *Jer.* xx. 7, 8, 9. Note, When we find ourselves at any time perplexed and embarrassed in the way of our duty, we ought to have recourse to God, and lay open our case before him, by faithful and fervent prayer: If we retreat, retreat to him and no further.

2. He expostulated with him, *ver.* 22, 23. He knew not how to reconcile the providence with the promise, and the commission he had received. Is this God's coming down to deliver Israel? Must I, who hoped to be a blessing to them, become a scourge to them? By this attempt to get them out of the pit, they are but sunk the further into it. Now he asks, 1. *Wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this people?* Note, (1.) Even then when God is coming towards his people in ways of mercy, yet sometimes he takes such methods as that they may think themselves but ill treated. The instruments of deliverance, when they aim to



to help, prove to hinder; and that becomes a trap which it was hoped would have been for their welfare, God suffering it to be so, that we may learn to cease from man, and may come off from a dependence upon second causes. 2. When the people of God think themselves ill treated, they should go to God by prayer, and plead with him, and that is the way to have better treatment in God's good time.

2. *Why is it thou hast sent me?*

Thus, 1. He complains of his ill success; Pharaoh has done evil to this people, and not one step seems to be taken towards their deliverance. Note, It cannot but sit very heavy upon the spirits of those whom God employs for him to see that their labour doth no good, and much more to see that it doth hurt, eventually, though not designedly. It is uncomfortable to a good minister to perceive that his endeavours for mens conviction and conversion, do but exasperate their corruptions, confirm their prejudices, harden their hearts, and seal them up under unbelief. This makes them go in the bitterness of their souls, as the prophet, *Ezek. iii. 14.*

Or, 2. He enquires what was further to be done, *Why hast thou sent me?* i. e. What other method shall I take in pursuance of my commission? Note, Disappointments in our work must not drive us from our God, but still we must consider why we are sent.

### C H A P. VI.

*Much ado there was to bring Moses to his work, and when the ice was broke, but some difficulty occurred in carrying it on, there was no less ado to put him forward in it. Witness this chapter in which,*

1. *God satisfies Moses himself in an answer to his complaints in the close of the foregoing chapter, ver. 1. 2. He gives him fuller instructions, than had yet been given him what to say to the children of Israel, for their satisfaction, ver. 2—8. but to little purpose, ver. 9. 3. He sends him again to Pharaoh, ver. 10, 11. But Moses objects against that, ver. 12. upon which a very strict charge is given to him and his brother, to execute their commission with vigour, ver. 13. 4. Here is an abstract of the genealogy of the tribes of Reuben, and Simeon, to introduce that of Levi, that the pedigree of Moses and Aaron might be cleared, ver. 14—27. and so the chapter concludes with a repetition of so much of the preceding story as was necessary to make way for the following chapter.*

1. **T**HEN the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. 2. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: 3. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. 4. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. 5. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. 6. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage: and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments. 7. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD. 9. And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Here, 1. God silenceth Moses's complaints with the assurance of success in this negotiation, repeating the promise made him, chap. iii. 20, *after that, he will let you go.* Then when Moses was at his wits end, wishing he had staid in Midian, rather than have come to Egypt to make ill worse, when he was quite at a loss what to do, *Then the Lord said unto Moses,* for the quieting of his mind, *Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh,* ver. 1. Now the affair is come to a crisis, things are as bad as they can be, Pharaoh is in the height of pride, and Israel in the depth of misery. Now is my time to appear. See *Psal. xii. 6, Now will I arise.* Note, Man's extremity is God's opportunity of helping, and saving. Moses had been expecting what God would do, but now he shall see what he will do, shall see his day at

length, *Job xxiv. 1.* Moses had been trying what he could do, and could effect nothing, Well, saith God, now thou shalt see what I will do; let me alone to deal with this proud man; *Job xl. 12, 13.* Note, Then the deliverance of God's church will be accomplished, when God takes the work into his own hands. *With a strong hand,* i. e. being forced to it by a strong hand; *he shall let them go.* Note, As some are brought to their duty by the strong hand of God's grace, who are made willing in the day of his power, so others by the strong hand of his justice, breaking those that would not bend:

2. He gives him further instructions, for his encouragement; and the encouragement of the people of Israel to hope for a glorious issue of this affair. Take comfort,

1. From God's name Jehovah, ver. 2, 3. He begins with this, *I am Jehovah,* the same with *I am that I am;* the fountain of being and blessedness, and infinite perfection. The patriarchs knew this name, but they did not know him in this matter by that which this name signifies. God would now be known by his name Jehovah, i. e. (1.) A God performing what he had promised, and so giving being to his promises. (2.) A God perfecting what he had begun, and finishing his own work. In the history of the creation God is never called Jehovah, till *the Heavens and the earth were filled,* Gen. ii. 4. When the salvation of the saints is completed in eternal life, then he will be known by his name Jehovah, *Rev. xxii. 13.* in the mean time they shall find him for their strength and support, El-shaddai, a God all-sufficient, a God that is enough, and will be so, *Mich. vii. 20.*

2. From his covenant, ver. 4, *I have established my covenant.* Note, The covenants God makes he establisheth, they are made as firm as the power and truth of God can make them. We may venture our all upon this bottom.

3. From his compassions, ver. 5, *I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel;* he means their groaning on occasion of the late hardships put upon them. Note, God takes notice of the increase of his peoples calamities, and observes how their enemies grow upon them.

4. From his present resolutions, ver. 6, 7, 8. Here is line upon line to assure them that they should be brought triumphantly out of Egypt, ver. 6, and should be put in possession of the land of Canaan, ver. 8, *I will bring you out. I will rid you. I will redeem you. I will bring you into the land of Canaan, and I will give it you.* Let man take the shame of his unbelief which needs such repetitions, and let God have the glory of his condescending grace, which gives us such repeated assurances for our satisfaction.

5. From his gracious intentions in all these, which were great, and becoming him, ver. 7. 1. He intended their happiness, *I will take you to me for a people;* a peculiar people, and *I will be to you a God,* and more than this we need not ask, we cannot have, to make us happy. 2. He intended his own glory, *ye shall know that I am the Lord.* God will attain his own ends, nor shall we come short of them, if we make them our chief end too. Now one would think, these good words, and comfortable words, should have revived the drooping Israelites, and made them to forget their misery; but, on the contrary, their miseries made them regardless of God's promises, ver. 9, *they hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.* That is, 1. They were so taken up with their troubles that they did not heed him. 2. They were so cast down with their late disappointment that they did not believe him. And, 3. They had such a dread of Pharaoh's power and wrath, that they durst not themselves move in the least towards their deliverance. Note, 1. Disconsolate spirits often put from them the comforts they are entitled to, and stand in their own light. See *Isa. xxviii. 12.* 2. Strong passions oppose strong consolations. By indulging ourselves in discontent and fretfulness, we deprive ourselves of the comfort we might have both from God's word and providence, and must thank ourselves if we go comfortless

10. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 11. Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land. 12. And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? 13. And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Here, 1. God sends Moses the second time to Pharaoh, ver. 11. upon the same errand as before, to command him at his peril, that he let the children of Israel go. Note, God repeats his precepts, before he begins his punishments. Those that have oft been called in vain to leave their sins, yet must be called again, and again, *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,* *Ezek. iii. 11.* God is said to hew sinners by his prophets, *Hos. vi. 5.* which notes the repetition of the strokes; *How oft would I have gathered you?*



2. Moses makes objections, as one discouraged, and willing to give up the cause, *ver. 12.* He pleads, (1.) The unlikelihood of Pharaoh's hearing. *Behold the children of Israel have not hearkened to me,* they give no heed, no credit, to what I have said, how then can I expect that Pharaoh should hear me. If the anguish of their spirit makes them deaf to that which would compose and comfort them, much more will the *anger of his spirit*, his pride and insolence make him deaf to that which will but exasperate and provoke him. If God's professing people hear not his messengers, how can it be thought his professed enemy should? Note, The forwardness and untractableness of these that are called Christians is a very great discouragement to ministers, and makes them ready to despair of success in dealing with those that are atheistical and prophane. We would be instrumental to unite Israelites, to refine and purify them, to comfort and pacify them, but if they hearken not to us, how shall we prevail with those, in whom we cannot pretend to such an interest? But *with God all things are possible.* (2.) He pleads the unreadiness and infirmity of his own speaking. *I am of uncircumcised lips*; it is repeated, *ver. 30.* He was conscious to himself that he had not the gift of utterance, had no command of language; his talent did not lie that way. This objection God had given a sufficient answer to before, and therefore he ought not to have insisted upon it, for the sufficiency of grace can supply the defects of nature at any time. Note, Tho' our infirmities ought to humble us, yet they ought not to discourage us from doing our best in any service we have to do for God. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

3. God again joins Aaron in commission with Moses, and puts an end to the dispute, by interposing his own authority, and giving them both a solemn charge upon their allegiance to their great Lord to execute it with all possible expedition and fidelity. When Moses repeats his baffled arguments he shall be argued with no longer, but God gives him a charge, and Aaron with him, both to the children of Israel, and to Pharaoh, *ver. 13.* God's authority is sufficient to answer all objections, and binds us to obedience, *without murmuring or disputing*, Phil. ii. 14. Moses himself has need to be charged, and so has Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 13. 2 Tim. iv. 1.

14. These *be* the heads of their fathers houses: The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel; Hanoah, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these *be* the families of Reuben. 15. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these *are* the families of Simeon. 16. And these *are* the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi *were* an hundred thirty and seven years. 17. The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families. 18. And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: And the years of the life of Kohath *were* an hundred thirty and three years. 19. And the sons of Merari; Mahali, and Mushi: these *are* the families of Levi, according to their generations. 20. And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram *were* an hundred and thirty and seven years. 21. And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri. 22. And the sons of Uzziel; Misael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri. 23. And Aaron took him Elisheba daughter of Aminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 24. And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these *are* the families of the Korhites. 25. And Eleazar Aarons son took him *one* of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these *are* the heads of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families. 26. These *are* that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt, according to their armies. 27. These *are* they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these *are* that Moses and Aaron. 28. And it came to pass on the day *wh* the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt, 29. That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, *I am* the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee. 30. And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, *I am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

We have here a genealogy, not an endless one, such as the apostle condemns, 1 Tim. i. 4. for it ends in those two great

patriots, Moses and Aaron, and comes in here to shew that they were Israelites, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, whom they were sent to deliver, raised up unto them of their brethren as Christ also should be, who was to be the prophet and priest, the redeemer and law-giver of the gospel of Israel, and whose genealogy also like this was to be carefully preserved. The heads of the houses of three of the tribes are here named, agreeing with the accounts we had, *Gen. xvi.* Dr Lightfoot thinks that Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, are thus dignified here by themselves for this reason; because they three were left under marks of infamy by their dying father, Reuben, for his incest, and Simeon and Levi for their murder of the Shechemites, and therefore Moses would put this particular honour upon them, to magnify God's mercy in their repentance and remission, as a *pattern to them that should afterwards believe*: The two first rather seem to be mentioned only for the sake of the third, which was Levi, from whom Moses and Aaron descended, and all the priests of the Jewish church. Thus was the tribe of Levi distinguished betimes. Observe here,

1. That Kohath, from whom Moses and Aaron, and all the priests derived their pedigree, was a younger son of Levi, *ver. 16.* Note, The grants of God's favours do not go by seniority of age, and priority of birth, but the divine sovereignty often prefers the younger before the elder, so crossing hands.

2. That the age of Levi, Kohath, and Amram, the father, grandfather, and great grandfather, of Moses is here recorded, and they all lived to a great age, Levi to one hundred thirty-seven, Kohath to one hundred thirty-three, and Amram to one hundred thirty-seven, Moses himself came much short of them, and fixed seventy or eighty for the ordinary stretch of human life; *Psal. xc. 10.* for now God's Israel was multiplied, and become a great nation, and divine revelation was by the hand of Moses committed to writing, and no longer trusted to tradition, the two great reasons for the long lives of the patriarchs were ceased, and therefore from henceforward fewer years must serve men.

3. That Aaron married Elisheba, (the same name with that of the wife of Zecharias, Elizabeth, as Miriam the same with Mary) daughter of Aminadab, one of the chief of the fathers of the tribe of Judah, for the tribes of Levi and Judah oft intermarried, *ver. 23.*

4. It must not be omitted that Moses has recorded the marriage of his father Amram, with Jochebed his own aunt, *ver. 20.* and it appears by *Numb. xxvi. 59.* that it must be taken strictly, for his father's own sister, at least by the half blood: This marriage was afterwards forbidden, as incestuous, *Lev. xviii. 12.* which might be looked upon as a blot upon his family, tho' before that law; yet Moses doth not conceal it, for he sought not his own praise, but wrote with a sincere regard to truth, whether it smiled or frowned upon him.

5. He concludes it with a particular mark of honour on the persons he is writing of, tho' himself was one of them, *ver. 26, 27.* These *are* that Moses and Aaron, whom God pitched upon to be his plenipotentiaries in this treaty. These were they whom God spake to, *ver. 26.* and who spake to Pharaoh on Israel's behalf, *ver. 27.* Note, Communion with God and serviceableness to his church, are things that, above any other, put true honour upon men. Those are great indeed whom God conversed with, and whom he employs for him. Such were that Moses and Aaron, and something of this honour have all his saints, who are made to our God, kings and priests.

In the close of the chapter, he returns to his narrative, which he had broken off from somewhat abruptly, *ver. 13.* and repeats, (1.) The charge God had given him to deliver his message to Pharaoh, *ver. 24.* Speak *all* that I say unto thee, as a faithful ambassador. Note, Those that go on God's errand must not shun to declare *the whole counsel of God.* (2.) His objection against it, *ver. 30.* Note, Those that have at any time spoke unadvisedly with their lips ought oft to reflect upon it with regret, as Moses seems to do here.

## C H A P. VII.

In this chapter, 1. The dispute between God and Moses finishes, and Moses applies himself to the execution of his commission, in obedience to God's command, *ver. 1—7.* 2. The dispute between Moses and Pharaoh begins, and a famous trial of skill it was; Moses in God's name demands Israel's release, Pharaoh denies it. The contest is between the power of the great God, and the power of a proud prince, and it will be found in the issue, that when God judgeth he will overcome. 1. Moses confirms the demand he made to Pharaoh, by a miracle, turning his rod into a serpent, but Pharaoh hardens his heart against this conviction, *ver. 8. —13.* 2. He chastiseth his disobedience, by a plague, the first of the ten, turning the waters into blood, but Pharaoh hardens his heart against this correction, *ver. 14.* ad fin.

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. 2. Thou shalt speak all that



that I command thee : and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. 3. And I will harden Pharaohs heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. 4. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt, by great judgments. 5. And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them. 6. And Moses and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, so did they. 7. And Moses *was* fourscore years old, and Aaron fourscore and three years old, when they spake unto Pharaoh.

Here, 1. God encourageth Moses to go to Pharaoh, and at last silence all his discouragements. 1. He cloaths him with great power and authority, *ver. 1. I have made thee a god to Pharaoh*, i. e. my representative in this affair, as magistrates are called gods, because they are God's vicegerents. He was authorized to speak and act in God's name and stead, and under the divine direction was indued with a divine power, to do that which is above the ordinary power of nature, and invested with a divine authority, to demand obedience from a sovereign prince, and punish disobedience. Moses was a god, but he was only a made god, not essentially one by nature; he was no god, but by commission. He was a god, but he was only a god to Pharaoh, the living and true God is God to all the world. It is an instance of God's condescension, and an evidence that his thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace, that when he treats with men, he treats by men, whose terror shall not make us afraid. 2. He again nominates him an assistant, his brother Aaron, who was not a man of uncircumcised lips, but a notable spokesman; he shall be *thy prophet*, i. e. he shall speak from thee to Pharaoh, as prophets do from God, to the children of men. Thou shalt, as a god, inflict and remove the plagues, and Aaron as a prophet shall denounce them, and threaten Pharaoh with them. 3. He tells him the worst of it, that Pharaoh would not hearken to him, and yet the work should be done at last, Israel should be delivered, and God therein should be glorified, *ver. 4, 5.* The Egyptians who would not know the Lord, should be made to know him. Note, It is, and ought to be, satisfaction enough to God's messengers, that whatever contradiction and opposition may be given them thus far, they shall gain their point, that God will be glorified in the success of their embassy, and all his chosen Israel will be saved, and then they have no reason to say, that they have laboured in vain. See here, (1.) How God glorifies himself, he makes people know that he is Jehovah: Israel is made to know by the performance of his promises to them, *chap. vi. 3.* And the Egyptians are made to know it by the pouring out of his wrath upon them; thus God's name is exalted both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. (2.) What method he takes to do this; he humbles the proud, and exalts the poor, *Luke i. 51, 52.* If God stretch out his hand to sinners in vain, he will at last stretch out his hand upon them; and who can bear the weight of it?

2. Moses and Aaron apply themselves to their work without farther objection, *they did as the Lord commanded them*, *ver. 6.* Their obedience, all things considered, was well worthy to be celebrated, as it is by the Psalmist, *Psal. cv. 28. They rebelled not against his word*, viz. Moses and Aaron, whom he mentions, *ver. 26.* Thus Jonah, tho' at first was very averse, at length went to Nineveh. Notice is taken of the age of Moses and Aaron, when they undertook this glorious service: Aaron the elder (and yet in the inferior office) was eighty-three, Moses was eighty, both of them men of great gravity and experience, whose age was venerable, and whose years might *teach wisdom*, *ver. 7.* Joseph, who was to be only a servant to Pharaoh, was preferred at thirty years old; but Moses, who was to be a god to Pharaoh, was not so dignified till he was eighty years old. It was fit he should long wait for such an honour, and be long in preparing for such a service.

8. And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, saying, 9. When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11. Then Pharaoh also called the wise-men, and the forcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aarons rod swallowed up

their rods. 13. And he hardened Pharaohs heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

The first time that Moses made his application to Pharaoh he produced his instructions only, now he is directed to produce his credentials, and doth accordingly.

1. It is taken for granted that Pharaoh would challenge those demandants to work a miracle, that by a performance evidently above the power of nature; they might prove their commission from the God of nature. Pharaoh will say, Shew a miracle, not with any desire to be convinced, but in hopes none will be wrought, and then he would have some colour for his infidelity.

2. Orders are therefore given to turn the rod into a serpent, according to the instructions, *chap. iv. 2.* The same rod that was to give the signal of the other miracles is now itself the subject of a miracle, to put a reputation upon it. Aaron cast his rod to the ground, and instantly it became a serpent, *ver. 10.* This was proper not only to affect Pharaoh with wonder, but to strike a terror upon him, serpents are hurtful, dreadful animals, the very sight of one thus miraculously produced, might have softened his heart into a fear of that God by whose power it was produced. This first miracle though it was not a plague, yet amounted to the threatening of a plague. If it made not Pharaoh feel, it made him fear, and this is God's method of dealing with sinners, he comes upon them gradually.

3. This miracle, though too plain to be denied, is enervated, and the conviction of it taken off by the magicians imitation of it, *ver. 11, 12.* Moses had been originally instructed in the learning of the Egyptians, and was suspected to have improved himself in magical arts, in his long retirement; the magicians are therefore sent for to vie with him. And some think those of that profession had a particular spite at the Hebrews; ever since Joseph put them all to shame by interpreting a dream which they could make nothing of, in remembrance of which slur put on their predecessors, these magicians withstood Moses, as it is explained, *2 Tim. iii. 8.* Their rods became serpents, real serpents, some think by the power of God, beyond their intention or expectation, for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Others think by the power of evil angels, artfully substituting serpents in the room of the rods, God permitting the delusion to be wrought for wise and holy ends, that they might believe a lie, who received not the truth, and herein the Lord was righteous. Yet this might have helped to frighten Pharaoh into a compliance with Moses's demands, that he might be freed from these dreadful unaccountable phenomena, with which he saw himself on all sides surrounded. But to the seed of the serpent these serpents were no amazement. Note, God suffers the lying spirit to do strange things, that the faith of some may be tried and manifested, *Deut. xiii. 3. 1 Cor. xi. 19,* and the infidelity of others may be confirmed, and that he which is filthy may be filthy still, *2 Cor. iv. 4.*

4. Yet in this contest Moses plainly gains the victory; the serpent which Aaron's rod was turned into, swallowed up the other, which was sufficient to have convinced Pharaoh, on which side the right lay. Note, Great is the truth, and will prevail. The cause of God will undoubtedly triumph at last over all competition and contradiction, and will reign alone, *Dan. ii. 45.* But Pharaoh was not wrought upon by this; the magicians having produced serpents, he had this to say, that the case between them and Moses was disputable, and the very appearance of an opposition to truth, and the least head made against it, serves those for a justification of their infidelity, who are prejudiced against the light and love of it.

14. And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaohs heart is hardened, he refuseth to let the people go. 15. Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning, lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou shalt stand by the rivers brink, against he come: and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand. 16. And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and behold, hitherto thou wouldst not hear. 17. Thus saith the LORD, In this thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in mine hand, upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they shall be turned to blood. 18. And the fish that *is* in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall lothe to drink of the water of the river. 19. And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and *that* there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of wood*, and in *vessels of stone*. 20. And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded: and he lift up the rod and smote the waters that *were* in the river,



river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants : and all the waters that *were* in the river, were turned to blood. 21. And the fish that *was* in the river, died : and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river, and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 22. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments : and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them ; as the LORD had said. 23. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. 24. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink : for they could not drink of the water of the river. 25. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

Here is the first of the ten plagues, The turning of the water into blood, which was, (1.) A dreadful plague, and very grievous ; the very sight of such vast rolling streams of blood, pure blood no doubt, florid, and high coloured, could not but strike a horror upon people : much more afflictive were the consequences of it. Nothing more common than water, so wisely has providence ordered it, and so kindly, that that which is so needful, and serviceable to the comfort of human life should be cheap, and almost every where to be had ; but now the Egyptians must either drink blood or die for thirst. Fish was much of their food, *Num. xi. 5.* but the changing of the waters was the death of the fish, it was as a pestilence in that element, *ver. 21. the fish died.* In the general deluge they escaped, because perhaps they had not been then so serviceable to the luxury of men as they have been since, but in this particular judgment they perished, *Psal. cv. 29. he slew their fish* ; and when another destruction of Egypt long after is threatened, the disappointment of those that make sluices and ponds for fish is instanced in, *Isa. xix. 10.* Egypt was a pleasant land, but the noisom stench of dead fish, and blood, which by degrees would grow putrid now rendered it very unpleasant. (2.) It was a righteous plague, and justly inflicted upon the Egyptians. For, 1. Nilus, the river of Egypt, was their idol, they and their land had so much benefit by that creature, that they served and worshipped it more than the Creator. The fountain of Nile being (in this sense) unknown to them, they paid all their devotions to its streams : here therefore God punished them, and turned that into blood which they had turned into a god. Note, That creature which we idolize, God justly removes from us, or imbitters to us. He makes that a scourge to us, which we make a competitor with him. 2. They had stained the river with the blood of the Hebrews children, and now God made that river all bloody ; thus he gave them blood to drink, for they were worthy, *Rev. xvi. 6.* Note, Never any thirsted after blood, but sooner or later they had enough of it. (3.) It was a significant plague ; Egypt had a great dependence upon their river, *Zech. xiv. 18,* so that in smiting the river they were warned of the destruction of all their products till it came at last to their first-born. And this red river proved a direful omen of the ruin of Pharaoh and all his forces in the Red-Sea. This plague of Egypt is alluded to in the prediction of the ruin of the enemies of the New Testament church, *Rev. xvi. 3, 4.* But there the sea as well as the rivers and fountains of water are turned into blood, for spiritual judgments reach further, and strike deeper, than temporal judgments do. And lastly, let me observe in general concerning this plague, That one of the first miracles Moses wrought was turning water into blood, but one of the first miracles our Lord Jesus wrought was turning water into wine ; for the law was given by Moses, and it was a dispensation of death and terror, but grace and truth, which like wine makes glad the heart, came by Jesus Christ.

Now, 1. Moses is directed to give Pharaoh warning of this plague, Pharaoh's heart is hardened, *ver. 14,* therefore go try what this will do to soften it, *ver. 15.* Moses perhaps may not be admitted into Pharaoh's presence chamber, or the room of state where he used to give audience to ambassadors, and therefore he is directed to meet him by the river's side, whither God foresaw he would come in the morning, either for the pleasure of a morning's walk, or to pay his morning devotions to the river, for thus all people will walk, every one in the name of his God, they will not fail to worship their God every morning ; there Moses must be ready to give him new summons to surrender, and in case of a refusal, to tell him of the judgment that was coming upon that very river they were now standing on the banks of. Notice is thus given him of it before hand, that they might have no colour to say, it was a chance, or to attribute it to any other cause, but that it might appear to be done by the power of the God of the Hebrews, and as a punishment upon him for his obstinacy. Moses is expressly ordered to take the rod with him, that Pharaoh might be alarmed at the sight of that rod which had so lately triumphed over the rods of the magicians. Now learn hence, (1.) That the judgments of God are all known to himself before hand. He knows what he will do in wrath as well as mercy. Every consumption is a consumption determined, *Isa. x. 23.* (2.) That

men cannot over-run the alarms of God's wrath, because they cannot go out of the hearing of their own consciences : he that made their hearts can make his sword to approach to them. (3.) That God warns before he wounds ; for he is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

2. Aaron (who carried the mace) is directed to summon the plague by smiting the river with his rod, *ver. 19, 20.* It was done in the sight of Pharaoh, and his attendants, for God's true miracles were not performed as Satan's lying wonders were by them that peeped and muttered ; truth seeks no corners. An amazing change was immediately wrought ; all the waters, not only in the river, but in all their ponds, were turned into blood. 1. See here the Almighty power of God. Every creature is that to us which he makes it to be, water or blood. 2. See the mutability of all things under the sun, and what changes we may meet with in them. That which is water to day may be blood to-morrow, what is always vain may soon become vexatious. A river at the best is transient, but divine justice can quickly make it malignant. 3. See what mischievous work sin makes. If the things that have been our comforts prove our crosses, we must thank ourselves ; it is sin that turns our waters into blood.

3. Pharaoh endeavours to confront the miracle, because he resolves not to humble himself under the plague. He sends for the magicians, and by God's permission they ape the miracle with their enchantments, *ver. 22.* and this served Pharaoh for an excuse not to set his heart to this also, (*ver. 23.*) and a pitiful excuse it was. Could they have turned the river of blood into water again, it had been something, then they had proved their power, and Pharaoh had been obliged to them as his benefactors. But for them when there was such scarcity of water to turn more of it into blood, only to shew their art, plainly intimates that the design of the devil is only to delude his devotees and amuse them ; not to do them any real kindness, but to keep them from doing real kindness to themselves by repenting, and returning to their God.

4. The Egyptians in the mean time are seeking for relief against the plague, digging round about the river, for water to drink, *ver. 24.* Probably they found some, with much ado, God remembering mercy in the midst of wrath, for he is full of compassion, and would not let the subjects smart too much for the obstinacy of their prince.

5. The plague continued seven days, *ver. 25.* And in all that time Pharaoh's proud heart would not let him so much as desire Moses to intercede for the removal of it. Thus *the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, they cry not when he binds them, Job xxxvi. 13.* and then no wonder that his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

### C H A P. VIII.

Three more of the plagues of Egypt are related in this chapter, (1.) That of the frogs, which is, 1. Threatened, *ver. 1—4.* 2. Inflicted, *ver. 5, 6.* 3. Mimicked by the magicians, *ver. 7.* 4. Removed, at the humble request of Pharaoh, *ver. 8—14.* who yet hardens his heart, and notwithstanding his promise while the plague was upon him, *ver. 8.* refused to let Israel go, *ver. 15.* (2.) The plague of lice, *ver. 16, 17.* By which, 1. The magicians were baffled, *ver. 18, 19,* and yet, 2. Pharaoh was hardened, *ver. 19.* (3.) That of flies : 1. Pharaoh is warned of it before, *ver. 20, 21.* and told that the land of Goshen should be exempt from this plague, *ver. 22, 23.* 2. The plague is brought, *ver. 24.* 3. Pharaoh treats with Moses, about the release of Israel, and humbles himself, *ver. 25—29.* 4. The plague is thereupon removed, *ver. 31.* and Pharaoh's heart hardened, *ver. 32.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2. And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs. 3. And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs. 4. And the frogs shall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants. 5. And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. 6. And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt ; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. 7. And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. 8. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away



away the frogs from me, and from my people : and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD. 9. And Moses said unto Pharaoh Glory over me : when shall I intreat for thee, and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee, and thy houses, *that they may remain in the river only?* 10. And he said, To morrow. And he said, *Be it according to thy word : that thou mayest know, that there is none like unto the LORD our God.* 11. And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people ; they shall remain in the river only. 12. And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh : and Moses cried unto the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. 13. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses : and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields. 14. And they gathered them together upon heaps : and the land stank. 15. But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them ; as the LORD had said.

Pharaoh is here threatened first, and then plagued with frogs, as afterwards in this chapter with lice and flies, little despicable inconsiderable animals, and yet by their vast numbers, made sore plagues to the Egyptians : God could have plagued them with lions, or bears, or wolves, or with vultures, or birds of prey, but he chose to do it by these contemptible instruments. 1. That he might magnify his own power, he is Lord of the hosts of the whole creation, has them all at his beck, and makes what use he pleaseth of them. Some have thought the power of God is shewed as much in the making of an ant, as in the making of an elephant, so is his providence in serving his own purposes by the least creatures as effectually as by the strongest, that the excellency of the power in judgment, as well as mercy, may be of God, and not of the creature. See what reason we have to stand in awe of this God, who, when he pleaseth, can arm the smallest parts of the creation against us. If God be our enemy, all the creatures are at war with us. 2. That he might humble Pharaoh's pride, and chastise his insolence. What a mortification must it needs be to this haughty monarch to see himself brought to his knees, and forced to submit by such despicable means ! Every child is ordinarily able to deal with those invaders, and can triumph over them ; yet now so numerous are their troops, and so vigorous their assaults, that Pharaoh, with all his chariots and horsemen, could make no head against them. Thus he *poureth contempt upon princes* that offer contempt to him and his sovereignty, and makes those who will not own him above them, to know that when he pleases he can make the meanest creature to insult them, and trample upon them.

As to the plague of frogs we may observe,

1. How it was threatened. Moses no doubt attended the Divine Majesty daily for fresh instructions, and (perhaps while the river was yet blood) he is directed to give notice to Pharaoh of another judgment coming upon him in case he continue obstinate : *if thou refuse to let them go* it is at thy peril, *ver. 1, 2.* Note, God doth not punish men for sin unless they persist in it. *If he turn not, he will not whet his sword,* Psal. vii. 12. which implies favour, *if he turn.* So here, *if thou refuse,* I will smite thy borders, intimating, if thou comply, the controversy shall immediately be dropped. Observe how Moses represents the plague that was coming, as formidable in the extent of it ; the frogs should make such an inroad upon them, as should make them uneasy in their houses, in their beds, at their tables, they should neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, in quietness, but wherever they were should be infested by them, *ver. 3, 4.* Note, 1. God's curse upon a man will dog him wherever he goes, and lie heavy upon him whatever he doth. See *Deut. xxviii. 16, &c.* 2. There is no avoiding divine judgments, when they invade with commission.

2. How it was inflicted. Pharaoh not regarding the alarm, nor at all inclined to yield to the summons, Aaron is ordered to draw out the forces, and with his out-stretched arm and rod to give the signal of battle. *Dictum factum,* No sooner said than done ; the host is mustered, and under the conduct and command of an invisible power, shoals of frogs invade the land, and the Egyptians with all their art, and all their might, cannot check their progress, or so much as give them a diversion. Compare this with that prophecy of an army of locusts and caterpillars, *Joel ii. 2, &c.* and see *Isa. xxxiv. 16, 17.* Frogs came up at the divine call, and *covered the land.* Note, God has many ways of disquieting those that live at ease.

3. How the magicians were permitted to imitate it, *ver. 7.* They also brought up frogs, but could not remove those that God sent. The *unclean spirits* which come out of the mouth of the dragon are said to be *like frogs*, which go forth to the kings of the earth to deceive them, *Rev. xvi. 13.* which probably alludes to these frogs, for it follows upon the turning of the waters into blood. The dragon, like the magicians, intended by them to de-

ceive, but God intended by them to destroy those that would be deceived.

4. How Pharaoh began to relent, under this plague, and it was the first time he did so, *ver. 8.* He begs of Moses to intercede for the removal of the frogs, and promiseth fair that he *will let the people go.* He that a while ago had spoke with the utmost disdain both of God and Moses, now is glad to be beholden to the mercy of God, and the prayers of Moses. Note, Those that bid defiance to God and prayer, in a day of extremity, first or last, will be made to see their need of both, and will cry, *Lord, Lord,* Matth. vii. 22. Those that had bantered prayer have been brought to beg it ; and the rich man that had scorned Lazarus courted him for a drop of water.

5. How Moses fixes the time with Pharaoh, and then prevails with God by prayer for the removal of the frogs. Moses, to shew that his performances had no dependence upon the conjunctions or oppositions of the planets, or the luckiness of any one hour more than another, bids Pharaoh name his time. *Nullum tempus occurrit regi.* *ver. 9.* *Have thou this honour over me tell me, against when I shall intreat for thee.* This was designed for Pharaoh's conviction, that if his eyes were not opened by the plague, they might by the removal of it. So various are the methods God takes to bring men to repentance.

Pharaoh sets the time for *to morrow*, *ver. 10.* And why not immediately ? Was he so fond of his guests that he would have them stay another night with him ? No, but probably, he hoped that this night they would *go away of themselves*, and then he should get clear of the plague without being obliged either to God, or Moses. However, Moses joins issue with him upon it, *Be it according to thy word*, it shall be done just when thou wouldst have it done, *that thou mayest know that whatever the magicians pretend to, there is none like unto the Lord our God.* None has such a command as he has over all the creatures, nor any so ready to forgive those that humble themselves before him. Note, The great design both of judgments and mercies, is to convince us that *there is none like the Lord our God*, none so wise, so mighty, so good, no enemy so formidable, no friend so desirable, so valuable.

Moses hereupon applies himself to God, prays earnestly to him to remove the frogs, *ver. 12.* Note, We must pray for our enemies and persecutors, even the worst, as Christ did. Presently the frogs that came up one day, perished the next, or the next but one. They all died, *ver. 14.* and that it might appear they were real frogs, their dead bodies were left to be raked together in heaps, so that the smell of them became offensive, *ver. 13, 14.* Note, The great sovereign of the world makes what use he pleaseth of the lives and deaths of his creatures ; and he that gives a being to serve one purpose, may without wrong to his justice call for it again, presently to serve another purpose.

6. What was the issue of this plague, *ver. 15.* *When Pharaoh saw that there was respite*, without considering either what he had lately felt, or what he had reason to fear, he hardened his heart. Note, 1. Till the heart is renewed by the grace of God, the impressions made by the force of affliction do not abide ; the convictions wear off, and the promises that were extorted are forgotten. Till the disposition of the air is changed, what thaws in the sun, will freeze again in the shade. 2. God's patience is shamefully abused by impenitent sinners. The respite he gives them, to lead them to repentance, they are hardened by, and while he graciously allows them a truce in order to the making of their peace, they take that opportunity to rally again the baffled forces of an obstinate infidelity. See *Ecc. viii. 11.* *Psal. lxxviii. 34, &c.*

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 17. And they did so ; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast : all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not : so there were lice upon man and upon beast. 19. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God : and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them ; as the LORD had said.

Here is a short account of the plague of lice. It doth not appear that any warning was given of it before. Pharaoh's abuse of the respite granted him, might have been a sufficient warning to him to expect another plague : for if the removal of an affliction harden us, and so lose us the benefit of it, we may conclude it goes away with a purpose to return, or to make room for a worse.

Observe, 1. How this plague of lice was inflicted on the Egyptians, *ver. 16, 17.* The frogs were produced out of the waters, but those lice out of *the dust of the earth*, for out of any part of the creation God can fetch a scourge wherewith to correct those that rebel against him. He hath many arrows in his quiver. Even the *dust of the earth* obeys him. *Fear not then, thou worm Jacob*, for God can use these as a threshing instrument, if he pleases, *Isa.*



*Iſa.* xli. 14, 15. These lice, no doubt, were extremely vexatious, as well as scandalous to the Egyptians. Though they had respite, they had respite but a while, *Rev.* xi. 14. The second wo was past, but behold the third wo came very quickly.

2. How the magicians were baffled by it, *ver.* 18. They attempted to imitate it, but they could not; when they failed in that, it should seem they attempted to remove it, for it follows, *ſo there were lice upon man and beast*, in spite of them. This forced them to confess themselves over-powered, *This is the finger of God*, *ver.* 19. *i. e.* This check and restraint put upon us must needs be from a divine power. Note, 1. God has the devil in a chain, and limits him both as a deceiver, and as a destroyer; *Hitherto he shall come, but no further.* The devil's agents, when God permitted them, could do great things, but when he laid an embargo upon them, though but with his finger, they could do nothing. The magicians inability in this lesser instance, shewed whence they had their ability in the former instances which seemed greater, and that they had no power against Moses but what was given them from above. 2. Sooner or later God will extort even from his enemies acknowledgment of his own sovereignty and over-ruling power. It is certain, they must all (as we say) knock under at last, as Julian the apostate did, when his dying lips confessed, *Thou hast overcome me, O thou Galilean.* God will not only be too hard for all opposers, but will force them to own it.

3. How Pharaoh, notwithstanding this, was made more and more obstinate, *ver.* 19. even those that had deceived him now said enough to undeceive him, and yet he grew more and more obstinate. Even the miracles and the judgments were to him a favour of death unto death. Note, Those that are not made better by God's word and providences, are commonly made worse by them.

20. And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, (so he cometh forth to the water) and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 21. Else if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of flies, and also the ground whereon they are. 22. And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there: to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. 23. And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be. 24. And the LORD did so: and there came a grievous swarm of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and into his servants houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies. 25. And Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land. 26. And Moses said, It is not meet so to do: for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us? 27. We will go three days journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us. 28. And Pharaoh said I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away: intreat for me. 29. And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD, that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more, in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD. 30. And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. 31. And the LORD did according to the word of Moses, and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people: there remained not one. 32. And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Here is the story of the plague of flies, in which we are told,

1. How it was threatened, like that of frogs, before it was inflicted. Moses is directed, *ver.* 20. to rise early in the morning to meet Pharaoh, when he came forth to the water, and there to repeat his demands. Note, (1.) Those that would bring great things to pass for God and their generation must rise early, and redeem time in the morning. Pharaoh was early up at his superstitious devotions to the river, and shall we be for more sleep, and more slumber, when any service is to be done, which would pass well in our account in the great day? (2.) Those that would approve themselves God's faithful servants, must not be afraid of the face of man. Moses must stand before Pharaoh as proud as he was, and

tell him that which was in the highest degree humbling, must challenge him (if he refused to release his captives) to engage with an army of flies, which would obey God's orders, if Pharaoh would not. See a like threatening, *Iſa.* vii. 18. *The Lord will hiss, (or whistle) for the fly, and the bee, to come and serve his purposes.*

2. How the Egyptians and the Hebrews were to be remarkably distinguished in this plague, *ver.* 22, 23. It is probable, this distinction had not been so manifest and observable in any of the foregoing plagues, as it was to be in this. Thus as the plague of lice was made more convincing than any before it by the running of the magicians a-ground, so was this by the distinction made between the Egyptians, and the Hebrews. Pharaoh must be made to know that *God is the Lord in the midst of the earth*, and by this it will be known beyond dispute. 1. Swarms of flies which seem to us to fly at random, shall be manifestly under the conduct of an intelligent mind, while they are above the direction of any man. Hither they shall go, saith Moses; and thither they shall not come, and the performance is punctually according to this appointment, and both compared amount to a demonstration that he that said it, and he that did it, was the same, even a being of infinite power and wisdom. 2. The servants and worshippers of the great Jehovah shall be preserved from sharing in the common calamities of the place they live in, so that the plague which annoys all their neighbours shall not approach them, and this shall be an uncontestable proof, that God is *the Lord in the midst of the earth*. Put both these together, and it appears that *the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth*, and through the air too, to direct that which to us seems most casual to serve some great and designed end, that he may *show himself strong on the behalf of those whose hearts are upright with him*, 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

Observe how it is repeated, *ver.* 23, *I will put a division between my people and thy people.* Note, The Lord knows them that are his, and will make it appear, perhaps in this world, however in the other, that he hath set them apart for himself. A day will come, when ye shall *return and discern between the righteous and the wicked*, Mal. iii. 18. *the sheep and the goats*, Matth. xxv. 32. Ezek. xxxiv. 17. tho' now intermixed.

3. How it was inflicted, the day after it was threatened, *there came a grievous swarm of flies*, *ver.* 24. Flies of divers sorts, and such as devoured them, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 45. The prince of the power of the air has gloried in being Beel-zebub, the god of flies, but here it is proved that even in that he is a pretender, and an usurper, for even with swarms of flies God fights against his kingdom and prevails.

4. How Pharaoh upon this attack sounded a parley, and entered into a treaty with Moses and Aaron, about a surrender of his captives: But observe with what reluctance he yields.

1. He is content they should sacrifice to their God, provided they would do it *in the land of Egypt*, *ver.* 25. Note, God can extort a toleration of his worship even from those that are really enemies to it. Pharaoh, under the smart of the rod, is content they should do sacrifice, and will allow liberty of conscience to God's Israel, even in his own land.

But Moses will not accept his concession, he cannot do it, *ver.* 26. It would be an abomination to God, should they offer the Egyptian sacrifices: and an abomination to the Egyptians, should they offer to God their own sacrifices, as they ought, so that they could not sacrifice in the land but they must unavoidably incur the displeasure, either of their God, or of their task-masters; therefore he insists upon it, *ver.* 27. *We will go three days journey into the wilderness.* Note, Those that would offer acceptable sacrifice to God must, (1.) Separate themselves from the wicked and profane, for we cannot have fellowship both with the father of lights, and with the works of darkness, both with Christ and with Belial, 2 Cor. vi. 17. *Pſal.* xxvi. 4, 6. (2.) They must retire from the distractions of the world, and get as far as may be from the noise of it. Israel cannot keep the feast of the Lord, either among the brick-kilns, or among the flesh-pots of Egypt, no, *We will go into the wilderness*, Hos. ii. 14. Cant. vii. 11. (3.) They must observe the divine appointment; we will sacrifice as he shall command us, and not otherwise. Tho' they were in the utmost degree of slavery to Pharaoh, yet in the worship of God they must observe his commands, and not Pharaoh's.

2. When this proposal would not be accepted he consents they shall go into the wilderness, provided they do not go very far away, not so far but that he might fetch them back again, *ver.* 28. It is likely he had heard of their design upon Canaan, and suspected that if once they left Egypt they would never come back again, and therefore when he is forced to consent that they shall go, the swarms of flies buzzing that in his ears, yet he is not willing they should go out of his reach. Thus some sinners who in a pang of conviction part with their sins, yet are loth they should go very far away, for when the fright is over they will return to them again. A mighty struggle here was between Pharaoh's convictions and his corruptions; his convictions said, let them go, his corruptions said, yet not very far away; but he sided with his corruptions against his convictions, and it was his ruin.



This Propofal Moses fo far accepted, as that he promised the removal of this plague upon it, *ver.* 29. See here,

1. How ready God is to accept sinners submissions. Pharaoh doth but say, *Intreat for me* (though it is with regret that he truckles so far), and Moses promises immediately, *I will intreat the Lord for thee*; that he might see what the design of the plague was, not to bring him to ruin, but to bring him to repentance. With what pleasure did God say it, *1 Kin.* xxi. 29. *Seeft thou how Ahab humbles himself.*

2. What need we have to be admonished that we be sincere in our submissions; but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more. Those that deal deceitfully are justly suspected, and must be cautioned not to return again to folly, after God has once more spoken peace. *Be not deceived God is not mocked*; if we think to put a cheat upon God by a counterfeit repentance, and a fraudulent surrender of our selves to him, we shall prove in the end to have put a damning cheat upon our own souls.

Lastly, The issue of all was, that God graciously removed the plague, *ver.* 30, 31. but Pharaoh perfidiously returned to his hardness, and *would not let the people go, ver.* 32. His pride would not let him part with such a flower of his crown as his dominion over Israel was, nor his covetousness with such a branch of his revenue as their labours were. Note, Reigning lusts break through the strongest bonds, and make men impudently presumptuous, and scandalously perfidious. Let not sin therefore reign, for if it do, it will betray and hurry us to the grossest absurdities.

### C H A P. IX.

*In this chapter we have an account of three more of the plagues of Egypt.* 1. Murrain among the cattle, which was fatal to them, *ver.* 1—7. 2. Boils upon man and beast, *ver.* 8—12. 3. Hail, with thunder and lightning. 1. Warning is given of this plague, *ver.* 13—21. 2. It is inflicted to their great terror, *ver.* 22—26. 3. Pharaoh in a fright renews his treaty with Moses, but instantly breaks his word, *ver.* 27—35.

1. **T**HEN the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 2. For if thou refuse to let *them* go, and wilt hold them still, 3. Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: *there shall be* a very grievous murrain. 4. And the LORD shall sever between the cattle of Israel, and the cattle of Egypt: and there shall nothing die of all *that is* the childrens of Israel. 5. And the LORD appointed a set time, saying, To morrow the LORD shall do this thing in the land. 6. And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. 7. And Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Israelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Here is, 1. Warning given of another plague, viz. The murrain of beasts. When Pharaoh's heart was hardened after he had seemed to relent under the former plague, then Moses is sent to tell him there is another coming, to try what that would do towards the reviving of the impressions of the former plagues. Thus is the *wrath of God revealed from Heaven*; both in his word, and in his works, *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* (1.) Moses puts Pharaoh in a very fair way to prevent it, *Let my people go, ver.* 1. This was still the demand, God will have Israel released, Pharaoh opposeth it, and the trial is *whose word shall stand.* See how jealous God is for his people; when the year of his redemption is come, he will give Egypt for their ransom, that kingdom shall be ruined rather than Israel shall not be delivered. See how reasonable God's demands are, whatever he calls for it is but *his own*, they are *my people*; therefore let them go. (2.) He describes the plague that should come if he refused, *ver.* 2, 3. *The hand of the Lord* immediately, without the stretching out of Aaron's hand, *is upon the cattle*, many of which, some of all kinds, should die by a sort of pestilence. This was greatly to the loss of the owners: they had made Israel poor, and now God would make them poor. Note, The hand of God is to be acknowledged even in the sickness and death of cattle, or other damage sustained in them; for a sparrow falls not to the ground without our Father. (3.) As an evidence of the special hand of God in it, and of his particular favour to his own people, he foretels that none of their cattle should die, though they breathed in the same air, and drank of the same water, with the Egyptians cattle, *ver.* 4. *I will sever.* Note, When God's judgments are abroad, though they may light both on the righteous and the wicked, yet God makes such a distinction, that they are not the same to the one that, they are to

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the other. See *Isa.* xxvii. 7. The providence of God is to be acknowledged with thankfulness in the life of the cattle; for he *preserveth man and beast*, *Psal.* xxxvi. 6. (4.) To make the warning the more remarkable, the time is fixed, *ver.* 5. To morrow it shall be done, we know not what any day will bring forth, and therefore cannot say what we will do to morrow, but God can.

2. The plague itself inflicted. The cattle died, *ver.* 6. Note, The creature is made subject to vanity by the sin of man, being liable according to its capacity, both to serve his wickedness, and to share in his punishment as in the universal deluge, *Rom.* viii. 20, 22. Pharaoh and the Egyptians sinned, but the *sheep, what had they done?* yet they are plagued. See *Jer.* xii. 4. For the *wickedness of the land, the beasts are consumed.* The Egyptians afterwards, and some think now, worshipped their cattle, it was among them that the Israelites learned to make a god of a calf, in that therefore this plague meets with them. Note, What we make an idol of, it is just with God to remove from us, or imbibiter to us. See *Isa.* xix. 1.

3. The distinction put between the cattle of the Egyptians and the Israelites cattle, according to the word of God, not *one of the cattle of the Israelites died*, *ver.* 6, 7. Doth God take care for oxen? Yes, he doth, his providence extends itself to the meanest of his creatures. But it is written also for our sakes, that trusting in God, and making him our refuge, we may not be *afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, no not though *thousands fall at our side*, *Psal.* xci. 6, 7. Pharaoh sent to see if the cattle of the Israelites were infected, not to satisfy his conscience, but only to gratify his curiosity, or with design by way of reprisal to repair his own losses, out of their stocks. And having no good design in the enquiry, the report brought him made no impression upon him, but on the contrary his heart was hardened. Note, To those that are wilfully blind, even those methods of conviction which are ordained to life prove a favour of death unto death.

8. And the LORD said unto Moses, and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it towards the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. 9. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth *with* blains, upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. 10. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast. 11. And the magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the boil: for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. 12. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkned not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses.

Observe here concerning the plague of boils and blains,

1. That when they were not wrought upon by the death of their cattle, God sent a plague that seized their own bodies, and touched them to the quick. If lesser judgments do not do their work, God will send greater. Let us therefore humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and go forth to meet him in the way of his judgments, that his anger may be turned away from us.

2. The signal given by which this plague was summoned, was the sprinkling of warm ashes, from the furnace, towards heaven, (*ver.* 8, 10.) which was to signify the heating of the air with such an infection as should produce in the bodies of the Egyptians sore boils, which would be both noisome and painful. Immediately upon the scattering of the ashes a scalding dew came down out of the air, which blistered wherever it light. Note, Sometimes God shews men their sin in their punishment; they had oppressed Israel in the furnaces, and now the ashes of the furnace are made as much a terror to them, as ever their task-masters had been to the Israelites.

3. The plague itself was very grievous; even an itch and scab would be so, especially to the nice and delicate, but these eruptions were inflammations, like Job's. This is afterwards called the *botch of Egypt*, *Deut.* xxviii. 27, as if it were some new disease, never heard of before, and known ever after by that name. Note, Sores in the body are to be looked upon as the punishments of sin, and to be hearkened to as calls to repentance.

4. The magicians themselves were struck with these boils, *ver.* 11. 1. Thus they were punished, both, (1.) For helping to harden Pharaoh's heart, as Elymas for seeking to *pervert the right ways of the Lord*; God will severely reckon with those that strengthen the hands of the wicked in their wickedness. As also, (2.) For pretending to imitate the former plagues, and making themselves and Pharaoh sport with them. They that would produce lice, shall against their wills produce boils. Note, It is ill jesting with God's judgments, and more dangerous than playing with fire. *Be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong.* 2. Thus they were shamed in the presence of their admirers. How weak



weak were their enchantments, which could not so much as secure themselves. The devil can give no protection to those that are in confederacy with him. 3. Thus they were driven the field. Their power was restrained before, *chap. viii. 18.* but they continued to confront Moses, and confirm Pharaoh in his unbelief, till now at length they were forced to retreat, and could not stand before Moses, to which the apostle refers, *2 Tim. iii. 9.* When he saith, that their *folly was manifested unto all men.*

5. Pharaoh continued obstinate, for now *the Lord hardened his heart ver. 12.* Before he had *hardened his own heart*, and resisted the grace of God, and now God justly gave him up to his own hearts lusts, to a reprobate mind, and strong delusions, permitting Satan to blind and harden him, and ordering every thing from henceforward so as to make him more and more obstinate. Note, Wilful hardness is commonly punished with judicial hardness. If men shut their eyes against the light, it is just with God to close them. Let us dread this as the forest judgment a man can be under on this side hell.

13. And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. 14. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people: that thou mayest know that *there is none like me in all the earth.* 15. For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. 16. And in very deed for this *cause* have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth. 17. As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people, that thou wilt not let them go? 18. Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof, even until now. 19. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field: *for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die.* 20. He that feared the word of the LORD amongst the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses. 21. And he that regarded not the word of the LORD, left his servants and his cattle in the field.

Here is, 1. A general declaration of the wrath of God against Pharaoh, for his obstinacy. Though God had hardened his heart, *ver. 12,* yet Moses must repeat his applications to him; God suspends his grace, and yet demands obedience to punish him for requiring bricks of the children of Israel, when he denied them straw. God would likewise shew forth a pattern of long-suffering, and how he waits to be gracious to a *rebellious and gainsaying people.* Six times this demand hath been made in vain, yet Moses must make it the seventh time, *Let my people go, ver. 13.*

A most dreadful message Moses is here ordered to deliver to him, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear. 1. He must tell him, that he is marked for ruin. That he now stands as the butt at which God would shoot all the arrows of his wrath, *ver. 14, 15.* Now I will send *all my plagues*, now no place is found for repentance in Pharaoh, nothing can prevent his utter destruction, for that only would have prevented it. Now God begins to *harden his heart*, his case is desperate. I will send my plagues *upon thy heart*, not only temporal plagues upon thy body, but spiritual plagues upon thy soul. Note, God can send plagues *upon the heart*, either by making it senseless, or by making it hopeless, and those are the worst plagues. Pharaoh must now expect no respite, no cessation of arms, but to be followed with plague upon plague, till he is utterly consumed. Note, When God judgeth he will overcome; none ever hardened his heart against him and prospered. 2. He must tell him, that he is to remain in history a standing monument of the justice and power of God's wrath, *ver. 16.* *For this cause have I raised thee up* to the throne at this time, and made thee to stand the shock of the plagues hitherto, to shew in thee my power. Providence ordered it so that Moses should have a man of such a fierce and stubborn spirit as he was to deal with, and every thing was so managed in this transaction as to make it a most signal and memorable instance of the power God has to humble and bring down the proudest of his enemies. Every thing concurred to signalize this, that God's name, *i. e.* his uncontested sovereignty, his irresistible power, and his inflexible justice, might be declared throughout all the earth, not only to all places, but through all ages while the earth remains. Note, God sometimes raiseth up very ill men to honour and power, spares them long, and suffers them to grow insufferably insolent, that he may be so much the more glorified in their destruction at last. See how the neighbour nations at that

time improved the ruin of Pharaoh to the glory of God, *Exod. xviii. 11.* Jethro said upon it, *Now know I that the Lord is greater than all gods.* The apostle illustrates the doctrine of God's sovereignty with this instance, *Rom. ix. 17.* To justify God in these resolutions, Moses is bid to ask him, *ver. 17.* *As yet exaltest thou thyself against my people?* Pharaoh was a great king, God's people were poor shepherds at the best, and now poor slaves, and yet it shall be the ruin of Pharaoh if he exalt himself against them, for it is interpreted exalting himself against God. This was not the first time he reproved kings for their fakes, and let them know that he would not suffer his people to be trampled upon and insulted, no, not by the biggest of them.

2. Here is a particular prediction of the plague of hail, *ver. 18,* and a gracious advice to Pharaoh and his people, to send for their servants and cattle out of the field, that they might be sheltered from the hail, *ver. 19.* Note, When God's justice threatens ruin, his mercy at the same time shews us a way of escape from it, so unwilling is he that any should perish. See here what care God took, not only to distinguish between Egyptians and Israelites, but between some Egyptians and others. If Pharaoh will not yield, and so prevent the judgment itself, yet an opportunity is given to those that had any dread of God and his word, to save themselves, from sharing in the judgment. Note, Those that will take warning may take shelter, and those that will not may thank themselves, if they fall by the overflowing scourge; and the hail which will *sweep away the refuge of lies, Isa. xxviii. 17.* See the different effect of this warning, 1. *Some believed the things which were spoken,* and they feared, and housed their servants and cattle, *ver. 20.* like Noah, *Heb. xi. 7.* and it was their wisdom: even among the servants of Pharaoh there were some that trembled at God's word, and shall not the sons of Israel dread it? But, 2. Others believed not; though whatever plague Moses had hitherto foretold, the event exactly answered the prediction, and though if they had had any reason to question this, it would have been no great damage to them to have kept their cattle in the house for one day, and so supposing it a doubtful case to have chosen the surer side; yet they were so fool-hardy as in defiance to the truth of Moses, and the power of God (of both which they had already had experience enough to their cost) to leave out their cattle, Pharaoh himself it is probable giving them an example of the presumption, *ver. 21.* Note, Obstinate infidelity is deaf to the fairest warnings and the wisest counsels, which leaves the blood of them that perish upon their own heads.

22. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt; upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. 23. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. 24. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, since it became a nation. 25. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast: and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. 26. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail. 27. And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned *this time*: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked. 28. Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer. 29. And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD: and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know, how that the earth is the LORDS. 30. But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God. 31. And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* balled. 32. But the wheat and the rie were not smitten; for they *were* not grown up. 33. And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth. 34. And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

The threatened plague of hail is here summoned by the powerful hand and rod of Moses, *ver. 22, 23.* and it obeys the summons,



mons; or rather the divine command, for *fire and hail fulfil God's word*, *Psal. cxlviii. 8.* And here we are told;

1. What desolations it made upon the earth: the thunder and fire from Heaven, or lightning made it both the more dreadful, and the more destroying, *ver. 23, 24.* Note, God makes the clouds; not only his store-houses, whence he drops fatness on his people, but his magazines, whence when he pleaseth he can draw out a most formidable train of artillery, wherewith to destroy his enemies. He himself speaks of the *treasures of hail which he hath reserved against the day of battle and war*, *Job xxxviii. 22, 23.* Woful havock this hail made in the land of Egypt. It killed both men and cattle, and battered down not only the herbs but the trees, *ver. 25.* The corn that was above ground was destroyed, and that only preserved which as yet was not come up, *ver. 31, 32.* Note, God has many ways of *taking away the corn in the season thereof*, *Hof. ii. 9.* either by a secret blasting, or a noisy hail. In this plague the hot thunderbolts are said to destroy their flocks, as well as the hail, *Psal. lxxviii. 47, 48:* and see *Psal. cv. 32, 33.* Perhaps David alludes to this when in God's glorious appearances for the discomfiture of his enemies, he speaks of the hail-stones and coals of fire he threw among them, *Psal. xviii. 12, 13:* And there is a plain reference to it on the pouring out of the seventh vial, *Rev. xvi. 21.* Notice is taken, *ver. 26;* of the land of Goshen's being preserved from receiving any damage by this plague. God has the directing of the pregnant clouds, and causeth it to rain or hail on one city and not on another, either in mercy or judgment.

2. What a consternation it put Pharaoh in; see what effect it had upon him, 1. He humbled himself to Moses in the language of a penitent, *ver. 27, 28.* No man could have spoke better. He owns himself on the wrong side in his contest with the God of the Hebrews, *I have sinned* in standing it out so long: he owns the equity of God's proceedings against him, *The Lord is righteous*, and must be justified when he speaks, though he speak in thunder and lightning: he condemns himself and his land, *I and my people are wicked*, and deserve what is brought upon us: he begs the prayers of Moses, *Intreat the Lord for me* that this direful plague may be removed. And lastly, He promises to yield up his prisoners, *I will let you go:* What could one desire more? And yet his heart hardened all this while. Note, The terror of the rod oft extorts penitent acknowledgments from those who have no penitent affections; under the surprize and smart of affliction, they start up, and say that which is pertinent enough, not because they do think it, but because they knew they should, and *it is meet to be said.* 2. Moses hereupon becomes an intercessor for him with God. Though he had all the reason in the world to think that he would presently repent of his repentance, and told him so, *ver. 30.* yet he promises to be his friend in the court of Heaven. Note, Even those whom we have little hopes of yet we should continue to pray for, and to admonish, *1 Sam. xii. 23.* Observe, 1. The place Moses chose for his intercession, he went *out of the city*, *ver. 33.* not only for privacy in his communion with God, but to shew that he durst venture abroad into the field, notwithstanding the hail and lightning which kept Pharaoh and his servants within doors; knowing that every hail-stone had its direction from his God, who meant him no hurt. Note, Peace with God makes men thunder-proof, for it is the voice of their Father. 2. The gesture; he *spread abroad his hands unto the Lord*; an outward expression of earnest desire, and humble expectation: those that come to God for mercy must stand ready to receive it. 3. The end Moses aimed at in interceding for him, *that thou mayst know and be convinced, that the earth is the Lord's*, *ver. 29. i. e.* that God has a sovereign dominion over all the creatures, that they all are ruled by him, and therefore thou oughtest to be so. See what various methods God useth to bring men to their wits. Judgments are sent, and judgments removed, and all for the same end, to make men know that the Lord reigns. 4. The success of it. 1. He prevailed with God, *ver. 33.* But, 2. He could not prevail with Pharaoh, *he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart*, *ver. 34, 35.* The prayer of Moses opened and shut Heaven, like Elias's, *Jam. v. 17, 18.* and such is the power of God's two witnesses, *Rev. xi. 6.* yet neither Moses nor Elias, nor those two witnesses, could subdue the hard hearts of men. Pharaoh was frightened into a compliance by the judgment, but when it was over his convictions vanished, and his fair promises were forgotten. Note, Little credit is to be given to confessions upon the rack. Nay, Those that are not bettered by judgments and mercies, are commonly made worse.

### CHAP. X.

The eighth and ninth of the plagues of Egypt, that of locusts, and that of darkness are recorded in this chapter.

1. Concerning the plague of locusts, (1.) God instructs Moses in the meaning of these amazing dispensations of his providence, *ver. 1,* 2. (2.) He threatens the locusts, *ver. 3—6.* (3.) Pharaoh, at the persuasion of his servants, is willing to treat again with Moses, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* but they cannot agree, *ver. 10, 11.* (4.) The locusts come, *ver. 12—15.* (5.) Pharaoh cries peccavi, *ver. 16, 17.* whereupon Moses prays for the removal of the plague, and it is done, but Pharaoh's heart is still hardened, *ver. 18—20.*

2. Concerning the plague of darkness, 1. It is inflicted, *ver. 21—23.* 2. Pharaoh again treats with Moses about a surrender, but the treaty breaks off in a heat, *ver. 24—29.*

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants; that I might shew these my signs before him: 2. And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy sons son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them; that ye may know how that I am the LORD. 3. And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. 4. Else if thou refuse to let my people go, behold to morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast. 5. And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field. 6. And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth, unto this day. And he turned himself and went out from Pharaoh. 7. And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: Knowest thou not yet, that Egypt is destroyed? 8. And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? 9. And Moses said, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons, and with our daughters; with our flocks, and with our herds will we go: for we must hold a feast unto the LORD. 10. And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it, for evil is before you. 11. Not so: go now ye that are men, and serve the LORD, for that you did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Here, 1. Moses is instructed; we may well suppose he, for his part, was much astonished both at Pharaoh's obstinacy and at God's severity, and could not but be compassionately concerned for the desolations of Egypt, and at a loss what this contest would come to at last: Now here God tells him what he designed, not only Israel's release, but the magnifying of his own name, *that thou mayst tell* in thy writings, which shall continue to the world's end, *what I have wrought in Egypt*, *ver. 1, 2.* The ten plagues of Egypt must be inflicted, that they may be recorded for the generations to come as undeniable proofs, (1.) Of God's over-ruling power in the kingdom of nature, his dominion over all the creatures, and his authority to use them either as servants to his justice, or sufferers by it according to the counsel of his will. (2.) Of God's victorious power over the kingdom of Satan, to restrain the malice, and chastise the insolence of his and his church's enemies. These plagues are standing monuments of the greatness of God, the happiness of the church, and the sinfulness of sin; and standing monitors to the children of men in all ages not to *provoke the Lord to jealousy*, nor to *strive with their maker*. The benefit of these instructions to the world doth sufficiently balance the expence.

2. Pharaoh is reproved, *ver. 3.* Thus saith the Lord God of the poor, despised, persecuted Hebrews, *How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?* Note, It is justly expected from the greatest of men, that they humble themselves before the great God, and it is at their peril, if they refuse to do it. This hath more than once been God's quarrel with princes; Belshazzar did not humble his heart, *Dan. v. 22.* Zedekiah humbled not himself before Jeremiah, *2 Chron. xxxvi. 12.* And those that will not humble themselves, God will humble. Pharaoh had sometimes pretended to humble himself, but no account was made of it, because he was neither sincere nor constant in it.

3. The plague of locusts is threatened, *ver. 4, 5, 6.* The hail had broke down the fruits of the earth, but these locusts should come and devour them: and not that only, but they should fill their houses, whereas their country had sometimes been infested by these insects which had done them damage. This should be much worse than all the calamities of that kind which had ever been known. Moses, when he had delivered his message, not expecting any better answer than he had formerly, *turned himself and went out from Pharaoh*, *ver. 6.* Thus Christ appointed his disciples to depart from those who would not receive them, and to

shake



shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them, and ruin is not far off from those who are thus justly abandoned by the Lord's messengers, 1 Sam. xv. 27.

4. Pharaoh's attendants, his ministers of state, or privy-counsellors, interpose to persuade him to come to some terms with Moses, ver. 7. They, as in duty bound, represent to him the deplorable condition of the kingdom, *Egypt is destroyed*, and advise him by all means to release his prisoners, *Let the men go*, for Moses they found would be a snare to them; till it was done, and as good consent at first as at last; the Israelites were become a burthen-some stone to the Egyptians, and now at length the princes of Egypt were willing to be rid of them, Zech. xii. 3. Note, It is a thing to be pitied (and prevented if possible) that a whole nation should be ruined for the pride and obstinacy of its princes, *Salus populi suprema lex*.

5. A new treaty is hereupon set on foot between Pharaoh and Moses, in which Pharaoh yields they shall go into the wilderness to do sacrifice; but the matter in dispute was, who should go, ver. 8. 1. Moses insists upon it, that they would take their whole families, and all their effects along with them, ver. 9. Note, Those that serve God must serve him with all they have. Moses pleads we must hold a feast, therefore we must have our families to feast with, and our flocks and herds to feast upon to the honour of God. 2. Pharaoh will by no means grant this: he will allow the men to go, pretending that was all they desired, though this matter was never yet mentioned in any of the former treaties: but for the little ones, he resolves to keep them as hostages, to oblige them to return, ver. 10, 11. In a great passion he curseth and threateneth them in case they offered to remove their little ones, telling them it was at their peril. Note, Satan doth all he can to hinder those that serve God themselves, from bringing their children in to serve him. He is a sworn enemy to early piety, knowing how destructive it is to the interests of his kingdom: whatever would put us by from engaging our children to the utmost in God's service, we have reason to suspect the hand of Satan in it. 3. The treaty hereupon breaks off abruptly; they that that went out from Pharaoh's presence, ver. 6. were now driven out. Those will quickly hear their doom that cannot bear to hear their duty. See 2 Chr. xxv. 16. *Quos Deus destruet, eos dementat*. Never was man so infatuated to his own ruin as Pharaoh was.

12. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail hath left.

13. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east-wind upon the land all that day, and all that night: and when it was morning, the east-wind brought the locusts. 14. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. 15. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field through all the land of Egypt. 16. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. 17. Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only. 18. And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD. 19. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west-wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea: there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. 20. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

Here is, 1. The locusts invasion of the land, *God's great army*, Joel ii. 11. God bids Moses stretch out his hand, ver. 12. to becken them as it were, for they came at a call, and he stretched out his rod, ver. 13. compare chap. ix. 22, 23. Moses ascribes it not to the stretching out of his own hand, but of the rod of God, the instituted sign of God's presence with him. The locusts obey the summons, and fly upon the wings of the wind, the east-wind, and caterpillars without number, as we are told, Psal. cv. 34, 35. A formidable army of horse and foot might more easily have been resisted than this host of insects, who then is able to stand before the great God?

2. The desolations they made in it, ver. 15. They covered the face of the earth, and eat up the fruit of it. The earth God has given to the children of men, yet when God pleaseth he can disturb his possession by locusts and caterpillers, and send them to juggle him out. Herb grows for the service of man, yet when God pleaseth, those contemptible insects shall not only

be fellow-commoners with him, but shall plunder him, and eat the bread out of his mouth. Let our labour be, not for the habitation and meat which thus lies exposed, but for that which endures to eternal life, which cannot be thus invaded, nor thus corrupted.

3. Pharaoh's submission hereupon, ver. 16, 17. He had driven Moses and Aaron from him, ver. 11. telling them (it is likely) he would have no more to do with them. But now he calls for them again in all haste, and makes court to them with as much respect as before he had dismissed them with disdain. Note, The day will come when those who set at nought their counsellors, and despise all their reproofs, would be glad to make an interest in them, and engage their intercessions for them. The foolish virgins court the wise to give them of their oil; and see Psal. cxli. 6.

(1.) Pharaoh confesseth his fault, *I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you*. He now sees his own folly in the flights and affronts he had put on God and his ambassadors, and seems at least to repent of it. Note, When God convinceth men of sin, and humbleth them for it, their contempt of God's ministers, and the word of the Lord in their mouths, will certainly come into the account, and lie heavy upon their consciences. Some think when Pharaoh called God the Lord your God, he did in effect say, he should be none of his God. Many treat with God as a potent enemy, whom they are willing not to be at war with, but care not for treating with him as their rightful prince, whom they are willing to return to their allegiance to. True penitents lament sin as committed against God, even their own God, to whom they stand obliged.

(2.) He begs pardon, not of God as penitents ought, but of Moses, which it was more excusable in him, because by a special commission Moses was made a god to Pharaoh, and whosesoever sins he remitted, they were forgiven; when he prays forgive this once, he, in effect, promiseth not to offend in like manner any more, yet seems loth to express that promise, nor doth he say any thing particularly, of letting the people go. Note, Counterfeit repentance commonly cheats men with general promises, and is loth to covenant against particular sins.

(3.) He sets Moses on work to pray for him: There are those who in distress implore the help of other peoples prayers, but have no mind to pray for themselves, shewing thereby that they have no true love to God, nor any delight in communion with him. Pharaoh desires their prayers that this death only might be taken away, not this sin: he deprecates the plague of locusts, not the plague of a hard heart, which yet was much the more dangerous.

4. The removal of the judgment upon the prayer of Moses, ver. 18, 19. This was (1.) as great an instance of the power of God as the judgment itself. An east-wind brought the locusts, and now a west-wind carried them off. Note, Whatever point of the compass the wind is in, it is fulfilling God's word, and turns about with his counsel: The wind blows where it listeth for us, but not where it listeth for him: He directeth it under the whole Heaven. (2.) It was as great a proof of the authority of Moses, and as firm a ratification of his commission, and his interest in that God who both makes peace and creates evil, Isa. xlv. 7. Nay hereby he not only commanded a respect, but recommended himself to the good affections of the Egyptians, that the judgment came in obedience to his summons, but the removal of it in answer to his prayers; he never desired the woful day, tho' he threatened it; his commission indeed ran against Egypt, but his intercession was for it, which was a good reason why they should love him, tho' they feared him. (3.) It was also as strong an argument for their repentance, as the judgment itself, for by this it appeared that God is ready to forgive, and swift to shew mercy. If he turn away a particular judgment, as he did often from Pharaoh, or defer it, as in Ahab's case, upon the profession of repentance, and the shews of humiliation, what will he do if we be sincere, and how welcome will true penitents be to him? O that this goodness of God might lead us to repentance!

5. Pharaoh's return to his impious resolution again, not to let the people go, (ver. 20.) through the righteous hand of God upon him hardening his heart, and confirming him in his obstinacy. Note, Those that have oft baffled their convictions, and stood it out against them, forfeit the benefit of them, and are justly given up to those lusts of their own hearts, which (how strong soever their convictions be) prove too strong for them.

21. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. 22. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. 23. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days; but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. 24. And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you. 25. And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt-



burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God. 26. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither. 27. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28. And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself; see my face no more: for in *that* day thou seest my face, thou shalt die. 29. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

Here is, i. The plague of darkness brought upon Egypt; and a most dreadful plague it was, and therefore is put first of the ten, *Psal. cv. 28.* tho' it was one of the last, and in the destruction of the spiritual Egypt is produced by the fifth vial which is poured out upon the *seat of the beast*, *Rev. xvi. 10.* *His kingdom was full of darkness.* Observe particularly concerning this plague,

1. That it was a total darkness; we have reason to think, not only that the lights of heaven were clouded, but that all their fires and candles were put out by the damps or clammy vapours which were the cause of this darkness, for it is said, *ver. 23.* they *saw not one another.* It is threatened to the wicked, *Job xviii. 5, 6.* that the *spark of his fire shall not shine* (even the sparks of his own kindling as they are called, *Isa. l. 11.*) and that the *light shall be dark in his tabernacle.* Hell is utter darkness, the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee, *Rev. xviii. 23.*

2. That it was darkness which might be felt, *ver. 21.* felt in its causes by their fingers ends, so thick were the fogs felt in its effects (some think) by their eyes which were pricked with pain, and made the more sore by their rubbing of them. Great pain is spoken of as the effect of that darkness, *Rev. xvi. 10.* which alludes to this.

3. No doubt it was very frightful and amazing. The cloud of locusts, which had *darkened the land*, *ver. 15.* was nothing to this. The tradition of the Jews is, that in this darkness they were terrified by the apparitions of evil spirits, or rather by dreadful sounds and murmurs which they made, or (which is no less frightful) by the horrors of their own consciences; and this is the plague which some think is intended (for otherwise it is not mentioned at all there) *Psal. lxxviii. 49.* *He poured upon them the fierceness of his anger, by sending evil angels among them,* for those to whom the devil has been a deceiver, he will at length be a terror.

4. It continued three days; six nights (saith bishop Hall) in one; so long they were imprisoned by those chains of darkness, and the most lightsome palaces were perfect dungeons. No man rose from his place, *ver. 23.* They were all confined to their houses, and such a terror seized them, that few had the courage to go from the chair to the bed, or from the bed to the chair. Thus were they *silent in darkness*, *1 Sam. ii. 9.* Now Pharaoh had time to consider, if he would have improved it. Spiritual darkness is spiritual bondage, while Satan blinds mens eyes that they see not, he binds their hands and feet that they work not for God, nor move towards Heaven. They sit in darkness.

5. It was a righteous thing with God, thus to punish them; Pharaoh and his people had rebelled against the light of God's word, which Moses spake to them; justly therefore are they punished with darkness, for they loved it and chose it rather. The blindness of their minds brings upon them this darkness of their air; never was mind so blinded as Pharaoh's, never was air so darkened as Egypt's. The Egyptians by their cruelty would have extinguished the lamp of Israel, and quenched their coal, justly therefore doth God put out their lights; compare it with the punishment of the Sodomites, *Gen. xix. 11.* Let us dread the consequences of sin; if three days darkness was so dreadful, what will everlasting darkness be?

6. The children of Israel, at the same time, had light in their dwellings, *ver. 23.* not only in the land of Goshen, where most of them inhabited, but in the particular dwellings which in other places the Israelites had, dispersed among the Egyptians, as it appears they had, by the distinction afterwards appointed to be put on their door-posts. This is an instance, (i.) Of the power of God, above the ordinary power of nature; we must not think it is of course that we share in common mercies, and therefore no thanks to God for them, he could distinguish, and withhold that from us, which he grants to others. He doth indeed ordinarily make his sun to shine on the just and the unjust, but he could make a difference, and we must own ourselves indebted to his mercy that he doth not. (2.) Of the particular favour he bears to his people: They walk in the light, when others wander endlessly in thick darkness; wherever there is an Israelite indeed, tho' in this dark world there is light, there is a child of light, one for whom light is sown, and whom the day-spring from on high visits. When God made this difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians, who would not have preferred the poorest cottage of an Israelite before the finest palace of an Egyptian? There is still a real difference tho' not so discernable as one between the house of the wicked which is under a curse, and the habitation of the just which is blessed, *Prov. iii. 33.* we should believe that difference, and govern our-

No. vi.

selves by it, upon *Psal. cv. 28.* *He sent darkness, and made it dark, and they rebelled not against his word.* Some ground a conjecture, that during these three days of darkness the Israelites were circumcised in order to their celebrating of the passover which was now approaching; and that *that* was the word against which they rebelled not; for their circumcision when they entered Canaan, is spoken of as a second general circumcision, *Josh. v. 2.* However, during these three days of darkness to the Egyptians, if God had so pleased, the Israelites, by the light which they had, might have made their escape, and have asked Pharaoh no leave, but God would bring them out with a high hand, and not by stealth, or in haste, *Isa. lii. 12.*

2. Here is the impression made upon Pharaoh by this plague, much like that of the foregoing plagues.

1. It awakened him so far that he renewed the treaty with Moses and Aaron, and now at length consented that they should take their little ones with them, only would have their cattle left in pawn, *ver. 24.* It is common for sinners thus to dodge with God Almighty; some sins they will leave, but not all; they will leave their sins for a time, but they will not bid them a final farewell. They will allow him some share in their hearts, but the world and the flesh must share with him; thus they mock God, but they deceive themselves. Moses resolves not to abate in his terms, *our cattle shall go with us*, *ver. 26.* Note, The terms of reconciliation are so fixed, that tho' men dispute them never so long, they cannot possibly alter them, nor bring them lower: We must come up to the commands of God's will, for we cannot expect he should condescend to the provisos of our lusts. God's messengers must always be bound up by that rule, *Jer. xv. 19.* *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* Moses gives a very good reason why they must take their cattle with them; they must go to do sacrifice, and therefore they must take wherewithal. What numbers and kinds of sacrifices would be required they did not yet know, and therefore they must take all they had. Note, With ourselves and our children we must devote all our worldly possessions to the service of God, because we know not what use God will make of what we have, nor in what way we may be called upon to honour God with it.

2. Yet it exasperated him so far, that when he might not make his own terms, he broke off the conference abruptly, and took up a resolution to treat no more; *wrath now came upon him to the utmost*, and he became boundlessly outrageous, *ver. 28.* Moses is dismissed in anger, forbidden the court upon pain of death, or so much as to meet Pharaoh any more as he had been used to do by the river side, *in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt die*: Prodigious madness! Had not he found that Moses could plague him without seeing his face? Or, had he forgot how oft he has sent for him as his Physician to heal him, and ease him of his plagues, and must he now be bid to come near him no more? Impotent malice! to threaten him with death, who was armed with such a power, and at whose mercy he had so often lain himself. What will not hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word and commandments bring men to?

Moses takes him at his word, *ver. 29.* *I will see thy face no more*, viz. after this time, for this conference did not break off till chap. xi. 8. when Moses went out in a great anger and told Pharaoh how soon he would change his mind, and his proud stomach would come down; which was fulfilled, chap. xii. 31. when Pharaoh became an humble suppliant to Moses to depart. So that after this interview Moses came no more till he was sent for. Note, When men drive God's word from them, he justly chuseth their delusions, and answers them according to the multitude of their idols: When the Gadatens desired Christ to depart, he left them presently.

## C H A P. XI.

Pharaoh had bid Moses get out of his presence, chap. xi. 28. and Moses has promised this should be the last time he would trouble him, yet he resolves to say out what he had to say, before he left him; accordingly we have in this chapter, 1. The instructions God had given to Moses, which he was now to pursue, *ver. 1, 2.* together with the interest Israel and Moses had in the esteem of the Egyptians, *ver. 3.* 2. The last message Moses delivered to Pharaoh concerning the death of the first-born, *ver. 4-8.* 3. A repetition of the prediction of Pharaoh's hardening his heart, *ver. 9.* and the event answering it, *ver. 10.*

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence all together. 2. Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. 3. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt,



in the fight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the fight of the people.

Here is, (1.) The mighty favour Moses and Israel were in with God; 1. Moses was a favourite of Heaven, for God will not hide from him the thing he will do: God not only makes him his messenger to deliver his errands, but, as the man of his council, communicates his purpose to him, that he would bring one plague more, and but one, upon Pharaoh, and by that would complete the deliverance of Israel, *ver. 1.* Moses longed to see an end of this dreadful work, to see Egypt no more plagued, and Israel no more oppressed; well, faith God, now it is near an end, the warfare shall shortly be accomplished, the point gained, Pharaoh shall be forced to own himself conquered, and to give up the cause. After all the rest of the plagues God faith, I will bring one more. Thus after all the judgments executed upon sinners in this world, still there is one more reserved to be brought on them in the other world, which will completely humble those whom nothing else would humble.

(2.) The Israelites were favourites of Heaven, for God himself espouseth their injured cause, and takes care to see them paid for all their pains in serving the Egyptians. This was the last day of their servitude, when they were to go away, and their masters who had abused them in their work would now have defrauded them of their wages, and have sent them away empty, and the poor Israelites were so fond of liberty, that they themselves would be satisfied with that without pay, and glad to get out upon any terms: but he that executeth righteousness and judgment for the oppressed, provided that the labourers should not lose their hire, ordered them to demand it now at their departure, (*ver. 2.*) in jewels of silver and jewels of gold, to prepare for which, God by the plagues had now made the Egyptians as willing to part with them upon any terms, as before the Egyptians by their severities had made them willing to go upon any terms. Though the patient Israelites were content to lose their wages, yet God would not let them go without it. Note, One way or other God will right the injured, that in an humble silence commit their cause to him, and will see to it that none be losers at last by their patient suffering no more than by their services.

2. The mighty favour Moses and Israel were in with the Egyptians, *ver. 3.* (1.) Even the people that had been hated and despised now came to be respected, the wonders wrought on their behalf put an honour upon them, and made them considerable. How very great do they look, for whom God thus fights! Thus the Lord gave them favour in the sight of the Egyptians, by making it appear how much he favoured them: he also changed the spirit of the Egyptians towards them, and made them to be pitied of their oppressors, *Psal. cvi. 46.* (2.) The man Moses was very great: How could it be otherwise, when they saw what power he was clothed with, and what wonders were wrought by his hand. Thus the apostles, though otherwise despicable men, came to be magnified, *Acts v. 13.* Those that honour God he will honour; and those that approve themselves faithful to him, how meanly soever they may pass through this world, there is a day coming when they will look great, very great, in the eyes of all the world, even theirs who now look upon them with the utmost contempt. Observe, Though Pharaoh hated Moses, there were those of Pharaoh's servants that respected him. Thus in Cæsar's household, even Nero's, there were some that had an esteem for blessed Paul, *Phil. i. 13.*

4. And Moses said, Thus faith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. 5. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. 6. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. 7. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. 8. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out: and he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger. 9. And the LORD said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you; that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt. 10. And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

Warning is here given to Pharaoh of the last and conquering plague which was now to be inflicted, which was the death of all the first-born in Egypt at once. This had been first threatened, *Exod. iv. 23.* I will slay thy son, thy first-born, but is last executed,

and lesser judgments tried, which, if they had done the work, would have prevented this. See how slow God is to wrath; and how willing to be met in the way of his judgments, and to have his anger turned away, and particularly how precious the lives of men are in his eyes: if the death of their cattle would have humbled and reformed them, their children had been spared, but if men will not improve the gradual advances of divine judgments, they must thank themselves if they find in the issue that the work was reserved for the last.

1. The plague itself is here particularly foretold, *ver. 4, 5, 6.* The time is fixed, about midnight; the very next midnight, the dead time of the night, when they were all asleep, all their first-born should sleep the sleep of death, not silently and insensibly, so as not to be discovered till morning, but so as to rouse the families at midnight, to stand by and see them die. The extent of this plague is described, *ver. 5.* The prince that was to succeed in the throne was not too high to be reached by it, nor the slaves at the mill too low to be taken notice of. Moses and Aaron were not ordered to summon this plague, no, I will go out, faith God, *ver. 4.* It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; what is hell but that?

2. The special protection which the children of Israel should be under, and the manifest difference that should be put between them and the Egyptians; while angels drew their swords against the Egyptians, there should not so much as a dog bark at any of the children of Israel, *ver. 7.* An earnest was hereby given of the difference which shall be put in the great day between God's people and his enemies: did men know what a difference God puts, and will put to eternity, between those that serve him and those that serve him not, religion would not seem to them such an indifferent thing as they make it, nor would they act in it with so much indifferency as they do.

3. The humble submission which Pharaoh's servants should make to Moses, and how they should speak him fair to be gone, *ver. 8.* They shall come down, and bow themselves. Note, The proud enemies of God and his Israel shall be made to truckle at last, *Rev. iii. 9,* and shall be found liars to them, *Deut. xxxiii. 29.* When Moses had thus delivered his message, it is said, he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger, though he was the meekest of all the men of the earth. Probably, he expected that the very threatening of the death of the first-born should have wrought upon Pharaoh to comply, especially he having complied so far already, and having seen how exactly all Moses's predictions hitherto were fulfilled. But it had not that effect; his proud heart would not yield, no, not to save all the first-born of his kingdom: no marvel that men are not deterred from vicious courses by the prospects given them of eternal misery in the other world, when the imminent peril they run of the loss of all that is dear to them in this world will not frighten them. Moses hereupon was provoked to a holy indignation, being grieved, as our Saviour afterwards, for the hardness of his heart, *Mar. iii. 5.* Note, It is a great vexation to the spirits of good ministers to see people deaf to all the fair warnings given them, and running headlong upon ruin, notwithstanding all the kind methods taken to prevent it: Thus Ezekiel went in the bitterness of his spirit, *Ezek. iii. 14.* because God had told him that the house of Israel would not hearken to him, *ver. 7.* Thus to be angry at nothing but sin, is the way not to sin in anger.

Moses, upon occasion of the mention of the disturbance Pharaoh's obstinacy gave him, (1.) reflects upon the previous notice God had given him of this, *ver. 9.* The Lord had said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken to you. The Scripture has foretold the incredulity of those who should hear the gospel that it might not be a surprise or stumbling block to us, *Joh. xii. 37, 38.* *Rom. x. 16.* Let us think never the worse of the gospel of Christ for the flights men generally put upon it, for we are told before what cold entertainment it would meet with. (2.) He recapitulates all he had said before to this purpose, *ver. 10.* That Moses did all these wonders, as they are here related before Pharaoh, he himself was an eye-witness of them, and yet he could not prevail, which was a certain sign that God himself had in a way of righteous judgment hardened his heart. Thus the Jews rejection of the gospel of Christ was so gross an absurdity, that it might easily be inferred from it, that God had given them the spirit of slumber, *Rom. xi. 8.*

## C H A P. XII.

This chapter gives an account of one of the most memorable ordinances, and one of the most memorable providences of all that are recorded in the Old Testament. 1. None of all the ordinances of the Jewish church were more eminent than that of the passover, nor any more frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and we have here an account of the institution of it. The ordinance consisted of three parts. 1. The killing and eating of the Paschal Lamb, *ver. 1—6.* 2. The sprinkling of the blood upon the door-posts, spoken of as a distinct thing, *Heb. xi. 28.* and peculiar to this first passover, *ver. 7.* with the reason for it, *ver. 11—13.* 3. The feast of unleavened bread for seven days after; this points rather at what was to be done after in the observance of this ordinance, *ver. 14—20.* This institution is communicated



communicated to the people, and they instructed in the observance, 1. Of this first passover, ver. 21—23. 2. Of the after passovers, ver. 24—27. And the Israelites obedience to these orders, ver. 28. 2. None of all the providences of God concerning the Jewish church was more illustrious, nor more frequently mentioned than the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt. 1. The first-born of the Egyptians are slain, ver. 29, 30. 2. Orders are given immediately for their discharge, ver. 31—33. 3. They begin their march, (1.) loaded with their own effects, ver. 34. (2.) Enriched with the spoils of Egypt, ver. 35, 36. (3.) Attended with a mixt multitude, ver. 37, 38. (4.) Put to their shifts for present supply, ver. 39. This event is dated, ver. 40—42. Lastly, A recapitulation in the close (1.) of this memorable ordinance, with some additions, ver. 43—49. (2.) Of this memorable providence, ver. 50, 51.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2. This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. 3. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. 4. And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house, take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. 5. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats. 6. And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. 8. And they shall eat the flesh in that night; roast with fire, and unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire: his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning: and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire. 11. And thus shall ye eat it; with your loyns girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it is the LORDS passover, 12. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am the LORD. 13. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. 14. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations: you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. 15. Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. 16. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you: no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. 17. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations, by an ordinance for ever. 18. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. 19. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger or born in the land. 20. Ye shall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.

Moses and Aaron here receive of the Lord what they were afterwards to deliver to the people concerning the ordinance of the passover, to which is prefixed an order for a new stile to be observed in their months, ver. 1, 2. This shall be to you the beginning of months. They had hitherto begun their year from the middle of

September, but henceforward they were to begin it from the middle of March; at least in all their ecclesiastical computations. It is good to begin the day, and begin the year, especially to begin our lives with God. This new calculation began the year with the spring, which reneweth the face of the earth, and was used as a figure of the coming of Christ, Cant. ii. 11, 12.

We may suppose, that while Moses was bringing the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, he was directing the Israelites to prepare for their departure at an hour's warning. Probably, he had by degrees brought them near together from their dispersions, for they are here called the congregation of Israel, ver. 3. And to them as a congregation orders are here sent. It is easy to imagine what a gaze they were all at, what a hurry they were all in, yet now they must apply themselves to the observance of a sacred rite, to the honour of God. Note, When our heads are fullest of care, and our hands of business, yet we must not forget our religion, nor suffer our selves to be indisposed for acts of devotion.

1. God appointed that on the night wherein they were to go out of Egypt, they should in each of their families kill a lamb, or two or three families, if they were small should join for a lamb. The lamb was to be got ready four days before, and that afternoon they should kill it (ver. 6.) as a sacrifice, not strictly, for it was not offered upon the altar, but as a religious ceremony, acknowledging God's goodness to them not only in preserving them from, but in delivering them by the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. See the antiquity of family religion: and see the convenience of the joining of small families together for religious worship, that it may be made the more solemn.

2. The lamb so slain they were to eat, roasted (we may suppose, in its several quarters) with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; because they were to eat it in haste, ver. 11. and to leave none of it until the morning; for God would have them to depend upon him for their daily bread, and not to take thought for the morrow. He that led them would feed them.

3. Before they eat the flesh of the lamb, they were to sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts, ver. 7. By which their houses were to be distinguished from the houses of the Egyptians, and so their first-born secured from the sword of the destroying angel, ver. 12, 13. Dreadful work was to be made this night in Egypt, all the first-born both of man and beast were to be slain, and judgment executed upon the gods of Egypt, which thou Moses doth not mention the fulfilling of it in this chapter, yet he speaks of it, Num. xxxiii. 4. It is very probable, the idols which the Egyptians worshipped were defaced, those of metal melted, those of wood consumed, and those of stone broke to pieces, whence Jethro infers, Exod. xviii. 11. The Lord is greater than all gods. The same angel that destroyed their first-born demolished their idols, which were no less dear to them. For the protection of Israel from this plague, they were ordered to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the door-posts, their doing of which would be accepted as an instance of their faith in the divine warnings, and their obedience to the divine precepts. Note, 1. In times of common calamity God will secure his own people, and set a mark upon them, they shall be hid either in Heaven or under Heaven; preserved either from the stroke of judgments, or at least from the sting of them. 2. The blood of sprinkling is the saints security in times of common calamity; that is it that marks them for God, pacifies conscience, and gives them boldness of access to the throne of grace, and so becomes a wall of protection round them, and a wall of partition between them and the children of this world.

4. This was to be annually observed as a feast of the Lord in their generations, to which the feast of unleavened bread was annexed, during which for seven days they were to eat no bread, but what was unleavened in remembrance of their being confined to such bread of necessity, for many days after they came out of Egypt, ver. 14—20. The appointment is inculcated for their better direction, and that they might not mistake concerning it, and to awaken them, who perhaps in Egypt were grown generally very stupid and careless in the matters of religion to a diligent observance of the institution.

Now without doubt there was much of gospel in this ordinance; it is oft referred to in the New Testament, and to us in it is the gospel preached, and not to them only who could not steadfastly look to the end of these things, Heb. iv. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 13.

The paschal lamb was typical; Christ is our passover, 1 Cor. v. 7. (1.) It was to be a lamb, and Christ is the lamb of God, Joh. i. 29. oft in the Revelation called the lamb, meek and innocent as a lamb, dumb before the shearers, before the butchers. (2.) It was to be a male of the first year, ver. 5, in its prime; Christ offered up himself in the midst of his days, not in infancy with the babes of Bethlehem. It notes the strength and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, on whom our help was laid. (3.) It was to be without blemish, ver. 5. noting the purity of the Lord Jesus, a lamb without spot, 1 Pet. i. 19. The judge that condemned him (as if his trial were only like the scrutiny that was made concerning the sacrifices, whether they were without blemish or no) pronounced him innocent. (4.) It was to be set apart four days before, ver. 3, 6. noting the



the designation of the Lord Jesus to be a Saviour, both in the purpose, and in the promise. It is very observable that as Christ was crucified at the passover, so he solemnly entered into Jerusalem four days before, the very day that the paschal lamb was set apart. (5.) It was to be slain and roasted with fire, ver. 6, 8, 9. noting the exquisite sufferings of the Lord Jesus, even unto death, the death of the cross. The wrath of God is as fire, and Christ was made a curse for us. (6.) It was to be killed by the whole congregation between the two evenings, *i. e.* between three a-clock and six. Christ suffered in the latter end of the world, *Heb.* ix. 26. by the hand of the Jews the whole multitude of them, *Luk.* xxiii. 18. and for the good of all his spiritual Israel. (7.) Not a bone of it must be broken, ver. 46. which is expressly said to be fulfilled in Christ, *Joh.* xix. 33, 36. noting the unbroken strength of the Lord Jesus.

2. The sprinkling of the blood was typical, (1.) It was not enough that the blood of the lamb was shed, but it must be sprinkled, noting the application of the merits of Christ's death to our souls; we must receive the atonement, *Rom.* v. 11. (2.) It was to be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop (ver. 22.) dipped in the basin. The everlasting covenant, like the basin, is the conservatory of this blood, the benefits and privileges purchased by it are laid up for us there; faith is the bunch of hyssop by which we apply the promises to our selves, and the benefits of the blood of Christ laid up in them. (3.) It was to be sprinkled upon the door-posts, noting the open profession we are to make of faith in Christ, and obedience to him, as those that are not ashamed to own our dependence upon him. The mark of the beast may be received in the forehead, or in the right hand, but the seal of the lamb is always in the forehead, *Rev.* vii. 3. There is a back-way to hell, but no back-way to Heaven, no, that is a high-way, *Isa.* xxxv. 8. (4.) It was to be sprinkled upon the lintel and the side-posts, but not upon the threshold, ver. 7. which cautions us to take heed of trampling under foot the blood of the covenant, *Heb.* x. 29. It is precious blood, and must be precious to us. (5.) The blood thus sprinkled was a means of the preservation of the Israelites from the destroying angel, who had nothing to do there where the blood was. If the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our consciences, it will be our protection from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell, *Rom.* viii. 1.

3. The solemn eating of the lamb was typical of our gospel duty to Christ. (1.) The paschal lamb was killed not to be looked upon only, but to be fed upon; so we must by faith make Christ ours, as we do that which we eat, and we must receive spiritual strength and nourishment from him, as from our food, and have delight and satisfaction in him, as we have in eating and drinking, when we are hungry or thirsty: See *Joh.* vi. 53, 54. (2.) It was to be all eaten; those that by faith feed upon Christ, must feed upon a whole Christ; they must take Christ and his yoke, Christ and his cross, as well as Christ and his crown. *Is Christ divided?* Those that gather much of Christ will have nothing over. (3.) It was to be eaten presently, not deferred till morning. ver. 10. To day Christ is offered, and is to be accepted while it is called to day, before we sleep the sleep of death. (4.) It was to be eaten with bitter herbs, ver. 8, in remembrance of the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt, we must feed upon Christ with sorrow and brokenness of heart in remembrance of sin, this will give an admirable relish to the paschal lamb; Christ will be sweet to us, if sin be bitter. (5.) It was to be eaten in a departing posture, ver. 11. when we feed upon Christ by faith, we must absolutely forsake the rule and dominion of sin, shake off Pharaoh's yoke; and we must sit loose to the world, and every thing in it, forsake all for Christ, and reckon it no bad bargain, *Heb.* xiii. 13, 14.

4. The feast of unleavened bread was typical of the Christian life, *1 Cor.* v. 7, 8. Having received Christ Jesus the Lord, 1. We must keep a feast, in holy joy, continually delighting our selves in Christ Jesus; no manner of work must be done, (ver. 16.) no care admitted and indulged inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, this holy joy: if true believers have not a continual feast it is their own fault. 2. It must be a feast of unleavened bread, kept in charity, without the leaven of malice, and in sincerity without the leaven of hypocrisy. The law was very strict as to the passover, and the Jews were so in their usages, that no leaven should be found in their houses, ver. 19. All the old leaven of sin must be put far from us, with the utmost caution and abhorrence, if we would keep the feast of a holy life to the honour of Christ. 3. It was to be an ordinance for ever, v. 17. as long as we live we must continue feeding upon Christ, and rejoicing in him always with thankful mentions of the great things he has done for us.

21. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb, according to your families, and kill the passover. 22. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts, with the blood that is in the basin: and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. 23. For the LORD will pass through to

smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. 24. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee, and to thy sons for ever. 25. And it shall come to pass when ye be come to the land, which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. 26. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? 27. That ye shall say, it is the sacrifice of the LORDS passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped. 28. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

(1.) Moses is here as a faithful steward in God's house, teaching the children of Israel to observe all things which God had commanded him, and no doubt he gave the instructions as largely as he received them, though they be not so largely recorded. It is here added, (1.) That this night, when the first-born were to be destroyed, no Israelite must stir out of doors till morning. *i. e.* till towards morning, when they would be called for to march out of Egypt, ver. 22. Not but that the destroying angel could have known an Israelite from an Egyptian in the street; but God would intimate to them, that their safety was owing to the blood of sprinkling, if they put themselves from under the protection of that, it was at their peril. Also, that those whom God hath marked for himself must not mingle themselves with evil doers: See *Isa.* xxvi. 20, 21. They must not go out of the doors lest they should straggle and be to seek, when they should be summoned to depart: they must stay within to wait for the salvation of the Lord, and it is good to do so. (2.) That hereafter they should carefully teach their children the meaning of this service, ver. 26, 27. Observe, 1. The question which the children should ask concerning this solemnity, which they would soon take notice of in the family, what mean you by this service? What is the meaning of all this care and exactness about eating this lamb, and this unleavened bread more than about common food? Why such a difference between this meal and other meals? Note, (1.) It is a good thing to see children inquisitive about the things of God; it is to be hoped they will find the way that are careful to ask it: Christ himself, when a child, heard and asked questions, *Luk.* ii. 46. (2.) It concerns us all rightly to understand the meaning of those holy ordinances wherein we worship God; what is the nature, and what the end of them; what is signified, and what intended; what is the duty expected from us in them, and what the advantages to be expected by us; every ordinance has a meaning, some ordinances, as sacraments, have not their meaning so plain and obvious as others have, there therefore we are concerned to search that we may not offer the blind for sacrifice, but may do a reasonable service. If either we be ignorant, of, or mistake about, the meaning of holy ordinances, we can neither please God nor profit our selves. 2. The answer which the parents were to return to this question, ver. 27, ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover; *i. e.* by the killing and sacrificing of this lamb we keep in remembrance that work of wonder and grace, which God did for our fathers, when (1.) to make way for our deliverance out of bondage, he slew the first-born of the Egyptians, so compelling them to sign our discharge, and (2.) though there were with us, even with us, sins against the Lord our God for which the destroying angel, when he was abroad doing execution, might justly have destroyed our first-born too, yet God graciously appointed and accepted the family sacrifice of a lamb, instead of the first-born, as of old the ram instead of Isaac, and in every house where the lamb was slain, the first-born were saved. The repetition of this solemnity in the return of every year was designed, 1. to look backward as a memorial, that in it they might remember what great things God had done for them and their fathers. The word *Pesach* signifies a leap, or transition, it is a passing over, for the destroying angel passed over the houses of the Israelites, and did not destroy their first-born. When God brings utter ruin upon his people he saith, he will not pass by them any more, *Amos* vii. 8.—viii. 1. intimating how oft he had passed by them, as now when the destroying angel passed over their houses. Note, (1.) Distinguishing mercies are very obliging; when a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand, and yet we are preserved, and have our lives given us for a prey, this should greatly affect us, *Psal.* xci. 7. In war or pestilence if the arrow of death have passed by us, passed over us, hit the next to us, and just missed us, we must not say it was by chance that we were preserved, but by the special providence of our God. (2.) Old mercies to our selves or to our fathers must not be forgotten, but had in everlasting remembrance, that God may be praised, our faith in him encouraged, and our hearts enlarged in his service.



2. It was designed to *look forward* as an earnest of the great sacrifice of the *lamb of God* in the fulness of time, instead of us; and our first-born; we were obnoxious to the sword of the destroying angel, but *Christ our passover was sacrificed for us*, his death was our life, and thus he was the *lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, from the foundation of the Jewish church: Moses kept the passover by faith in Christ, for he was *the end of the law for righteousness*.

(2.) The people received these instructions with reverence and ready obedience, 1. They *bowed the head and worshipped*, ver. 27. they hereby signified their submission to this institution as a Law, and their thankfulness for it as a favour and privilege. Note, When God gives law to us, we must give honour to him; when he speaks, we must *bow our heads and worship*. 2. They *went away and did* as they were commanded, ver. 28. Here was none of that discontent and murmuring among them which we read of, chap. v. 20, 21. The plagues of Egypt had done them good, and raised their expectations of a glorious deliverance which before they despaired of, and now they went forth to meet it in the way appointed. Note, The perfecting of God's mercies to us must be waited for in a humble observance of his institutions.

29. And it came to pass that at midnight the LORD smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. 30. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. 31. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from amongst my people, both you and the children of Israel: and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said. 32. Also take your flocks and your herds as ye have said, and be gone: and bless me also. 33. And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste: for they said, We be all dead men. 34. And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders. 35. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses: and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. 36. And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*: and they spoiled the Egyptians.

Here is, 1. The Egyptians sons, even *their first-born*, slain, ver. 29, 30. If Pharaoh would have taken the warning which was given him of this plague, and would thereupon have released Israel, what a great many dear and valuable lives might have been preserved? But see what obstinate infidelity brings upon men. Observe, (1.) The time when this blow was given, it was at midnight, which added to the terror of it: the three nights next before were made dreadful by the additional plague of darkness, which might be felt, and doubtless disturbed their repose; and now when they hoped for some quiet night's rest, at midnight was the alarm given; when the destroying angel drew his sword against Jerusalem it was in the day-time, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15. which made it the less frightful, but the destruction of Egypt was by a *pestilence walking in darkness*, Psal. xci. 6. shortly there will be a rousing cry at midnight, *Behold the bridegroom cometh*. (2.) On whom the plague fastened, on *their first-born*, the joys and hopes of their respective families. They had slain the Hebrews children, and now God slew theirs. Thus he visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and he is *not unrighteous who taketh vengeance*. (3.) How far it reached, from the throne to the dungeon; prince and peasant stand upon the same level before God's judgments, for there is no respect of persons with him: See Job xxxiv. 19, 20. Now the *slain of the Lord were many, multitudes, multitudes* fall in this *valley of decision*, when the controversy between God and Pharaoh was to be determined. (4.) What an out-cry was made upon it, *there was a great cry in Egypt*, universal lamentation for their only sons, (with many) and with all for their *first-born*. If any be suddenly taken ill in the night, we use to *call up neighbours*, but the Egyptians could have no help, no comfort from their neighbours, all being involved in the same calamity. Let us learn from hence, 1. To tremble before God, and to be afraid of his judgments, Psal. cxix. 120. Who is able to stand before him, or dares resist him? 2. To be thankful to God for the daily preservation of us and our families: Lying so much exposed we have reason to say, it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.

2. God's sons, even his first-born, released; this judgment conquered Pharaoh, and obliged him to *surrender at discretion*, without capitulating: Men had as good come up to God's terms at first, for he will never come down to theirs, let them dodge as

No. vi.

long as they will. Now Pharaoh's proud stomach comes down, and he yields to all that Moses had insisted on; *serve the Lord as ye have said*, ver. 31, and *take your flocks as ye have said*, ver. 32. Note, God's word will stand, and we shall get nothing by disputing it, or delaying to submit to it. Hitherto the Israelites might not be permitted to depart, but now things were come to the last extremity, and now, 1. They are *commanded to depart*, ver. 31. *Rise up and get you forth*. Pharaoh had told Moses he should *see his face no more*, but now he sent for him; those will seek God early in their distress, who before had set him at defiance. Such a fright he was now in, that he gave orders by night for their discharge, fearing lest if he delayed any longer, he himself should fall next; and that he sent them out not as men hated (as the Pagan historians have represented this matter) but as men feared, is plainly discovered by his humble request to them, ver. 32, *bless me also*; let me have your prayers, that I may not be plagued for what is passed when you are gone. Note, Those that are enemies to God's church are enemies to themselves, and sooner or later they will be made to see it. 2. They are hired to depart by the Egyptians; they cried out, ver. 33, *we be all dead men*. Note, When death comes into our houses, it is reasonable for us to think of our own mortality. Are our relations dead? It is easy to infer from thence that we are dying, and in effect already dead men: Upon this consideration they were urgent with the Israelites to be gone, which gave great advantage to the Israelites in borrowing their jewels, ver. 35, 36. When the Egyptians urged them to be gone, it was easy for them to say, the Egyptians had kept them poor, and they could not undertake such a journey with empty purses, if they would give them wherewithal to bear their charges, they would be gone. And this the divine wisdom designed in suffering things to come to this extremity; that they becoming formidable to the Egyptians might have what they would for the asking; the Lord also by the influence he has on the minds of people inclined the hearts of the Egyptians to furnish them with what they desired, probably intending thereby to *make them atonement*, that the plagues might be staid, as the Philistines when they returned the Ark sent a present with it for a trespass-offering, having an eye to this precedent, 1 Sam. vi. 3, 6. The Israelites might receive and keep what they thus borrowed or rather required, of the Egyptians. 1. As justly as servants receive wages from their masters for work done, and sue for it, if it be detained. 2. As justly as conquerors take the spoils of their enemies whom they have subdued; Pharaoh was in rebellion against the *God of the Hebrews*, by which all that he has is forfeited. 3. As justly as subjects receive the estates granted them by their prince. God is the sovereign proprietor of the earth, and the fulness thereof, and if he take from one and give to another, who may say unto him what dost thou? It was by God's special order and appointment that the Israelites did what they did, which was sufficient to justify them, and bear them out, but what they did, will by no means patronize the like done by any other, who cannot pretend to any such warrant. Let us remember, 1. That the king of kings can do no wrong. 2. That he will do right to those whom men wrong, Psal. cxlvi. 7. Hence it is, that the *wealth of the sinner* often proves to be *laid up for the just*, Job xxvii. 16, 17.

37. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were men*, besides children. 38. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, *even very much cattle*. 39. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough, which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. 40. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. 41. And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. 42. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel, in their generations.

Here is the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt; having obtained their dismissal, they set forward without delay, and did not defer till any more convenient season. Pharaoh was now in a good mind, but they had reason to think he would not long continue so, and therefore it was no time to linger. We have here an account,

1. Of their number, about *six hundred thousand men*, (ver. 37.) besides women and children, which, I think, we cannot suppose to make less than twelve hundred thousand more. What a vast increase was this to arise from seventy souls in little more than two hundred years time! See the power and efficacy of that blessing, when God commands it, *Be fruitful and multiply*. This was typical of the multitudes that were brought into the



gospel church, when it was first founded, so *mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.*

2. Of their retinue, ver. 38. *a mixed multitude went up with them*, hangers on to that great family. Some perhaps willing to leave their country, because it was laid waste by the plagues, and to go seek their fortune (as we say) with the Israelites. Others went out of curiosity to see the solemnities of Israel's sacrifice to their God which had been so much talked of, and expecting to see some glorious appearances of their God to them in the wilderness, having seen such glorious appearances of their God for them in the field of Zoan. Probably, the greatest part of this mixed multitude was but a rude unthinking mob, that followed the crowd they knew not why; we afterwards find that they proved a snare to them, *Numb. xi. 4.* and it is likely, when soon after they understood that, that the children of Israel were to continue forty years in the wilderness, they quitted them, and returned to Egypt again. Note, There were always those among the Israelites, that were not Israelites; hypocrites in the church, who make a deal of mischief, but will be shaken off at last.

3. Of their effects. They had with them *flocks and herds, even very much cattle.* This is taken notice of, because it was long e'er Pharaoh would give them leave to remove their effects, which were chiefly cattle, *Gen. xvi. 32.*

4. Of the provision made for the camp which was very poor and slender. They brought some dough with them out of Egypt in their knapsacks, *ver. 34.* They had prepared to bake the next day, in order to their remove, understanding it was very near, but being hastened away sooner than they thought of, by some hours, they took the dough as it was, unleavened, and when they came to Succoth, their first stage, they baked unleavened cakes, and tho' they were sapless and unsavory, yet the liberty they were brought into, made it the most joyful meal they had ever eaten in their lives. Note, The servants of God must not be slaves to their appetites; nor solicitous to wind up all the delights of sense to the height of pleasurableness. We should be willing to take up with dry bread, nay with unleavened bread, rather than neglect or delay any service we have to do for God, as those whose meat and drink it is to do his will.

5. Of the date of this great event; it was just *four hundred and thirty years* from the promise made to Abraham (as the Apostle explains it, *Gal. iii. 17.*) at his first coming into Canaan, during all which time, *the children of Israel*, i. e. the Hebrews, the distinguished chosen seed, were sojourners in a land that was not theirs, either Canaan or Egypt. So long the promise God made to Abraham of a settlement lay dormant and unfulfilled, but now at length it revived, and things began to work towards the accomplishment of it. The first day of the march of Abraham's seed towards Canaan was just four hundred and thirty years (it should seem to a day) from the promise made to Abraham, *Gen. xii. 2. I will make of thee a great nation.* See how punctual God is to his time; tho' his promises be not performed quickly, they will be accomplished in their season.

6. Of the memorableness of it, *ver. 42. It is a night to be much observed.* 1. The providences of that first night were very observable; memorable was the destruction of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of the Israelites by it; God herein made himself taken notice of. 2. The ordinances of that night in the annual return of it were to be carefully observed, *this is that night of the Lord*, that remarkable night, to be celebrated in all generations. Note, The great things God doth for his people are not to be only nine days wonder, (as we say) but the remembrance of them is to be perpetuated throughout all ages. Especially the work of our redemption by Christ; this first passover night was a night of the Lord, *much to be observed*, but the last passover night in which Christ was betrayed (and that with the rest of the ceremonial institutions superseded and abolished) was a night of the Lord *much more to be observed*, when a yoke heavier than that of Egypt was broke from off our necks, and a land better than that of Canaan set before us. That was a temporal deliverance to be celebrated in their generations; this an eternal redemption to be celebrated in the praises of glorified saints, *world without end.*

43. And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof. 44. But every mans servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. 45. A foreigner, and an hired servant shall not eat thereof. 46. In one house shall it be eaten, thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof. 47. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. 48. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it: and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. 49. One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. 50. Thus did all the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded

Moses and Aaron, so did they. 51. And it came to pass the self same day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, by their armies.

Some further precepts are here given concerning the passover, as it should be observed in times to come.

1. *All the congregation of Israel must keep it*, *ver. 47.* All that share in God's mercies should join in thankful praises for them. Tho' it was observed in families apart, yet it is looked upon as the act of *the whole congregation*, for the lesser communities constituted the greater. The New Testament passover, the Lord's supper, ought not to be neglected by any that are capable of celebrating it. He is unworthy the name of an Israelite, that can contentedly neglect the commemoration of so great a deliverance.

2. No stranger that was uncircumcised might be admitted to eat of it, *ver. 43, 45, 48.* None might sit at the table, but those that came in by the door, nor may any now approach to the improving ordinance of the Lord's supper, who have not first submitted to the initiating ordinance of baptism. We must be born again by the word, e'er we can be nourished by it. Nor shall any partake of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, nor feast upon it, who are not first *circumcised in heart*, *Col. ii. 11.*

3. Any stranger that was circumcised might be welcome to eat of the passover, even *servants*, *ver. 44.* If by circumcision they would make themselves *debtors to the law*, in its burthens, they were welcome to share in the joy of its solemn feasts, and not otherwise. Only it is intimated, *ver. 48*, that those who were masters of families must not only be circumcised themselves, but all their males must be circumcised too. If in sincerity, and with that zeal which the thing requires, and deserves, we give up ourselves to God, we will with ourselves give up all we have to him, and do our utmost that all ours may be his too. Here is an early indication of favour to the poor Gentiles, that the stranger, if circumcised, stands upon the same level with the home-born Israelite. *One law for both*, *ver. 49.* This was a mortification to the Jews, and taught them that it was their dedication to God, not their descent from Abraham, that intitled them to their privileges. A sincere proselyte was as welcome to the passover as a native Israelite, *Isa. lvi. 6, 7.*

4. *In one house shall it be eaten*, (*ver. 46.*) for good-fellowship sake, that they might rejoice together, and edify one another in the eating of it. None of it must be carried to another place, or left to another time, for God would not have them so taken up with care about their departure, as to be indisposed to take the comfort of it, but to leave Egypt, and enter upon a wilderness with cheerfulness, and in token of that to eat a good hearty meal. The Papists carrying their consecrated Host from house to house, is not only superstitious in itself, but contrary to this typical law of the passover, which was, that no part of the lamb should be carried abroad.

The chapter concludes with a repetition of the whole matter, That the children of Israel did as they were bidden, and God did for them as he promised, *ver. 50, 51.* for he will certainly be the author of salvation to them that obey him.

## C H A P. XIII.

In this chapter we have, 1. The commands God gave to Israel, (1.) *To sanctify all their first-born to him*, *ver. 1, 2.* (2.) *To be sure to remember their deliverance out of Egypt*, *ver. 3, 4.* and in remembrance of it to keep the feast of unleavened bread, *ver. 5—8.* (3.) *To transmit the knowledge of it with all possible care to their children*, *ver. 8—10.* (4.) *To set apart unto God the firstlings of their cattle*, *ver. 11—13.* and to explain that also to their children, *ver. 14—16.* 2. The care God took of Israel when he had brought them out of Egypt. (1.) *Choosing their way for them*, *ver. 17, 18.* (2.) *Guiding them in the way*, *ver. 20—22.* And their care of Joseph's bones, *ver. 19.*

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Sanctifie unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine. 3. And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4. This day came ye out, in the month Abib. 5. And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. 6. Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. 7. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall



shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. 8. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt. 9. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand and for a memorial between thine eyes; that the LORDS law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. 10. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

Care is here taken to perpetuate the remembrance,

1. Of the preservation of Israel's first-born, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. In memory of that distinguishing favour, and in gratitude for it, the first-born in all ages were to be consecrated to God, as his peculiars, *ver. 2*, and to be redeemed, *ver. 13*. God, who by the right of creation, is proprietor and sovereign of all the creatures, here lays claim in particular to the first-born of the Israelites, by right of protection, *Sanctify to me all the first-born*. The parents were not to look upon themselves as interested in their first-born, till they had first solemnly presented them to God, recognized his title to them, and received them back, at a certain rate from him again. Note, (1.) That which is by special distinguishing mercy spared to us should be in a peculiar manner dedicated to God's honour; at least some grateful acknowledgment in works of piety and charity should be made, when our lives have been given us for a prey, or the lives of our children. (2.) God that is the first and best, should have the first and best, and to him we should resign that which is most dear to us, and most valuable. The first-born were the joy and hope of their families, therefore *they shall be mine*, saith God. By this it will appear that we love God best (as we ought) if we are willing to part with that to him, which we love best in this world. (3.) It is the *church of the first-born* that is sanctified to God, *Heb. xii. 23*. Christ is the *first-born among many brethren*, *Rom. viii. 29*. and by virtue of their union with him, all that are born again, and born from above, are accounted as first-born. There is an *excellency of dignity and power* belonging to them, and *if children then heirs*.

2. The remembrance of their coming out of Egypt must also be perpetuated, *ver. 3*. *Remember this day*. Remember it by a good token, as the most remarkable day of your lives, the birth-day of our nation, or the day of its coming to age, to be no longer under the rod. Thus the day of Christ's resurrection is to be remembered, for in it we were raised up with Christ out of death's *house of bondage*. The scripture tells not expressly what day of the year Christ rose, as he told the Israelites what day of the year they were brought out of Egypt, that they might remember it yearly, but very particularly what day of the week it was; plainly intimating, that as the more valuable deliverance, and of greater importance, it should be remembered weekly. Remember it, for *by strength of hand the Lord brought you out*. Note, The more of God and his power appears in any deliverance, the more memorable it is. Now that it might be remembered, (1.) They must be sure to keep the *feast of unleavened bread*, *ver. 5, 6, 7*. It was not enough that they remembered it, but they must celebrate the memorial of it in that way and manner which God had appointed, and use the instituted means of preserving the remembrance of it. So under the Gospel we must not only remember Christ, but *do this in remembrance of him*. Observe, How strict the prohibition of leaven is, *ver. 7*. not only no leaven must be eaten, but none must be seen, no not in all their quarters. Accordingly, the Jews usage was, before the feast of the passover, to cast all the leavened bread out of their houses, either they burnt it, or buried it, or broke it small and threw it into the wind, they searched diligently with lighted candles in all the corners of their houses, lest any leaven should remain. The care and strictness enjoined in this matter was designed, 1. To make the feast the more solemn, and consequently the more taken notice of by the children, who would ask, Why is so much ado made? 2. To teach us how solicitous we should be to put away from us all sin, *1 Cor. v. 7*.

(2.) They must instruct their children in the meaning of it, and relate to them the story of their deliverance out of Egypt, *ver. 8*. Note, 1. Care must be taken betimes to instruct children in the knowledge of God. Here is an ancient law for catechizing. 2. It is particularly of great use to acquaint children betimes with the stories of the scripture, and to make those familiar to them. (3.) It is a debt we owe to the honour of God, and to the benefit of our childrens souls, to tell them of the great works God hath done for his church, both those which we have seen with our eyes done in our day, and which we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us. *Thou shalt shew thy son in that day*, the day of the feast, these things. When they were celebrating the ordinance they must explain it. *Every thing is beautiful in its season*. The passover is appointed for a sign, and for a memorial, that *the Lord's law may be in thy mouth*. Note, We must retain the remembrance of God's works, that we may remain under the influence of God's law. And those that have God's law in

their heart should have it in their mouth, and be often speaking of it, the more to affect themselves, and to instruct others.

11. And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, 12. That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix: and every firstling that cometh of a beast, which thou hast, the males *shall be* the LORDS. 13. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the first-born of man amongst thy children shalt thou redeem. 14. And it shall be when they son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. 15. And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the first-born of my children I redeem. 16. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

Here is, 1. Further directions concerning the dedicating of their first-born to God. (1.) The firstlings of their cattle were to be dedicated to God, as part of their possessions. Those of clean beasts, calves, lambs, and kids, if males, were to be sacrificed, *Exod. xxii. 30*. *Numb. xviii. 17, 18*. Those of unclean beasts, as colts, were to be redeemed with a lamb, or knocked on the head. For whatsoever is unclean (as we all are by nature) if it be not redeemed will be destroyed, *ver. 11, 12, 13*. (2.) The first-born of their children were to be redeemed, and by no means sacrificed as the Gentiles sacrificed their children to Moloch. The price of the redemption of the first-born was fixed by the law, *Numb. xviii. 16*. *five shekels*: we were all obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God, by the blood of Christ we are redeemed that we may be joined to the *church of the first-born*. They were to redeem both their children, and the firstlings of the unclean beasts, for our children are by nature polluted, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*

2. Further directions concerning the catechizing of their children, and all those of the rising generation from time to time in this matter. It is supposed when they saw all the firstlings thus devoted they would ask the meaning of it, and their parents and teachers must tell them the meaning of it, *ver. 14, 15, 16*. That God's special propriety in their first-born, and all their firstlings was founded in his special preservation of them from the sword of the destroying angel. Being thus delivered, they must serve him. Note, (1.) Children should be directed and encouraged to ask their parents questions concerning the things of God, which if they would do, it would be perhaps of all other the most profitable way of catechizing; and parents must furnish themselves with useful knowledge, that they may be ready always to give an answer to their enquiries. If ever the *knowledge of God cover the earth*, as the waters do the sea, the fountains of family instruction must first be broken up. (2.) We should all be able to shew cause for what we do in religion. As sacraments are sanctified by the word, so they must be explained and understood by it. God's service is reasonable, and it is then acceptable when we perform it intelligently, knowing what we do, and why we do it.

(3.) It must be observed, how often it is said in this chapter that *by strength of hand*, *ver. 3, 14, 16*. and *with a strong hand*, *ver. 9*. the Lord brought them out of Egypt. The more opposition is given to the accomplishment of God's purposes, the more is his power magnified therein. It is a strong hand that conquers hard hearts. Sometimes God is said to work deliverance, *not by might or power*, *Zech. iv. 6*. not by such visible displays of his power as this here.

(4.) Their posterity that should be born in Canaan, are directed to say, *The Lord brought us out of Egypt*, *ver. 14, 16*. Mercies to our fathers are mercies to us, we reap the benefit of them, and therefore must keep up a grateful remembrance of them. We stand upon the bottom of former deliverances, and were in the loins of our ancestors when they were delivered. Much more reason have we to say, that in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we were redeemed.

17. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near: for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. 18. But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up



up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. 19. And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him : for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you ; and ye shall carry up my bones away from hence with you. 20. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. 21. And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way ; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light : to go by day and night. 22. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

Here is, 1. The choice God made of their way, *ver. 17, 18.* He was their guide, Moses gave them direction but as he received it from the Lord. Note, The way of man is not in himself, *Jer. x. 23.* He may *devise his way*, and design it ; but after all, it is God that *directeth his steps*, *Prov. xvi. 9.* Man purposeth, but God disposeth, and in his disposal we must acquiesce, and set ourselves to follow providence.

There were two ways from Egypt to Canaan. One was a short cut from the north of Egypt to the south of Canaan, perhaps about four or five days journey ; the other was much further about through the wilderness, and that was the way which God chose to lead his people Israel in, *ver. 18.* (1.) There were many reasons why God led them *through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.* The Egyptians were to be drowned in the Red Sea, the Israelites were to be humbled, and proved in the wilderness, *Deut. viii. 2.* God had given it to Moses for a sign, *chap. iii. 12.* *Ye shall serve God in this mountain.* They had again and again told Pharaoh that they must go *three days journey into the wilderness to do sacrifice*, and therefore it was requisite they should bend their march that way, else they had justly been exclaimed against as notorious dissemblers. Before they entered the lists with their enemies, matters must be settled between them and their God, laws must be given, ordinances instituted, covenants sealed, the original contract ratified, and for the doing of this it was necessary they should retire into the solitudes of a wilderness, the only closet for such a crowd ; the high-road would be no proper place for these transactions. It is said, *Deut. xxxii. 10.* *He led them about*, some hundreds of miles about, and yet, *Psal. cvii. 7.* *He led them forth by the right way* ; God's way is the right way, though it seem about. If we think he leads not his people the next way, yet we may be sure he leads them the best way, and so it will appear when we come to our journey's end. *Judge nothing before the time.*

(2.) There was one reason why God did not lead them the nearest way, which would have brought them in a few days march to the land of the Philistines, for it was that part of Canaan that lay next to Egypt, because they were not as yet fit for war, much less for war with the Philistines, *ver. 17.* Their spirits were broke with slavery, it was not easy for them to turn their hands of a sudden from the trowel to the sword ; the Philistines were formidable enemies, too fierce to be encountered by fresh water soldiers ; it was convenient they should begin with the Amalekites, and be prepared for the wars of Canaan, by experiencing the difficulties of the wilderness. Note, God proportions his peoples trials to their strength, and will *not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able*, *1 Cor. x. 13.* That promise, if compared with the foregoing verses, will seem to refer to this here, as an instance of it. *God knows our frame*, and considers our weakness, and faint-heartedness, and by lesser trials will prepare us for greater. God is said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the eagle *brings up her young ones*, *Deut. xxxii. 11.* teaching them by degrees to fly.

Orders being thus given which way they should go, we are told, 1. That they went up themselves, not as a confused rout, but in good order, rank and file, they *went up harnessed*, *ver. 18.* They went up by *five in a rank*, so some ; in *five squadrons*, so others. They marched like an army with banners, which added much to their strength and honour.

2. That they took the bones of Joseph along with them, (*ver. 19.*) and probably the bones of the rest of Jacob's sons, unless (as some think) they had been privately carried to Canaan, (*Acts vii. 16.*) severally as they died. Joseph had particularly appointed that his bones should be carried up then when God visited them, *Gen. l. 25, 26.* so that their carrying up his bones was not only a performance of the oath their fathers had sworn to Joseph, but an acknowledgment of the performance of God's promise to them by Joseph, that he would visit them, and bring them out of the land of Egypt, and an encouragement to their faith and hope, that he would fulfil the other part of the promise which was to bring them to Canaan, in expectation of which they carried these bones with them while they wandered in the desert, they might think, Joseph's bones must rest at last, and then we shall. Moses is said to take these bones with him ; Moses was now a very great man ; so had Joseph been in his day, yet he was now but a box full of dry bones ; that was all that remained of him in this world, which might serve for a monitor to Moses, to remember his mortality. *I have said, ye are gods*, it was said so to Moses expressly, *but ye shall die like men.*

2. Here is the conduct they were blessed with in the way, *ver. 21, 22.* *The Lord went before them in a pillar.* In the two first stages, it was enough that God directed Moses whither to march, he knew the country, and the road, well enough, but now they are come to the edge of the wilderness, *ver. 20,* they would have occasion for a guide, and a very good guide they had, infinitely wise, kind, and faithful, *The Lord went before them*, the Shechinah, or appearance of the Divine Majesty, which was typical of Christ, or a previous manifestation of the Eternal Word, which in the fulness of time was to be *made flesh*, and *dwell among us.* Christ was with the church in the wilderness, *1 Cor. x. 9.* Now *their king passed before them, even the Lord on the head of them*, *Mic. ii. 13.* Note, Those whom God brings into a wilderness, he will not leave nor lose there, but will take care to lead them through it ; we may well think it was a very great satisfaction to Moses and the pious Israelites, to be sure that they were under a divine conduct. They need not fear missing their way who were thus led, nor being lost who were thus directed ; they need not fear being benighted who were thus illuminated, nor being robbed who were thus protected. They who make the glory of God their end, and the word of God their rule, the Spirit of God the guide of their affections, and the providence of God the guide of their affairs, may be confident that *the Lord goes before them*, as truly as he went before Israel in the wilderness, though not so sensibly ; we must live by faith.

1. They had sensible evidences of God's going before them. They all saw an appearance from Heaven of a pillar, which in the bright day appeared cloudy, and in the dark night appeared fiery ; we commonly see, that that which is a flame in the night is a smoke in the day, so was this. God gave them this ocular demonstration of his presence, in compassion to the infirmity of their faith, and in compliance with that infant-state of the church, which needed to be thus lisped to in their own language, but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed God's gracious presence with them, according to his promise.

2. They had sensible effects of God's going before them in this pillar. For, (1.) It led them the way in that vast howling wilderness, in which there was no road, no track, no way-marks, of which they had no maps, through which they had no guides. When they marched, this pillar went before them, at the rate that they could follow, and appointed the place of their encampment, as infinite wisdom saw fit ; which both eased them from care, and secured them from danger, both in moving, and in resting. (2.) It sheltered them from the heat by day, which at some times of the year was extreme. (3.) It gave them light by night when they had occasion for it, and at all times made their camp pleasant, and the wilderness they were in less frightful.

3. These were constant, standing miracles, *ver. 22.* He took not away the pillar of cloud ; no not when they seemed to have less occasion for it, travelling through inhabited countries ; no not when they murmured, and were provoking ; it never left them till it brought them to the borders of Canaan. It was a cloud which the wind could not scatter. This favour is acknowledged with thankfulness long after, *Neh. ix. 19.* *Psal. lxxviii. 14.*

There was something spiritual in this pillar of cloud and fire. (1.) The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in this cloud, which some think distilled dew upon them, *1 Cor. x. 2.* By coming under this cloud they signified their putting of themselves under the divine conduct and command by the ministry of Moses. Protection draws allegiance ; this cloud was the badge of God's protection, and so became the bond of their allegiance. Thus they were initiated, and admitted under that government, now when they were entering upon the wilderness. (2.) Some make this cloud a type of Christ. The cloud of his human nature was a veil to the light and fire of his divine nature, we find him, *Rev. x. 1.* *clothed with a cloud, and his feet as pillars of fire* : Christ is our way, the light of our way, and the guide of it. (3.) It signifies the special conduct and protection which the church of Christ is under in this world. God himself is the keeper of Israel, and he *neither slumbers nor sleeps*, *Psal. cxxi. 4.* *Isa. xxvii. 3.* There is a defence created not only on Sion's assemblies, but on every dwelling place in Sion. See *Isa. 4, 5, 6.* Nay, every Israelite indeed is hid under the shadow of God's wings, *Psal. xvii. 8.* angels, whose ministry was made use of in this cloud, are employed for their good, and pitch their tents about them. *Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people !*

## C H A P. XIV.

The departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt (which was indeed the birth of the Jewish church) is made yet more memorable by further works of wonder which were wrought immediately upon it. Witness the records of this chapter, the contents whereof, together with a key to it, we have, *Heb. xi. 29.* They passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which the Egyptians assayed to do were drowned, and this they did by faith, which intimates that there was something typical and spiritual in it. Here is, 1. The extreme distress and danger that Israel was in at the Red Sea. (1.) Notice was given of it to Moses before, *ver. 1—4.* (2.) The



(2.) *The cause of it was Pharaoh's violent pursuit of them,* ver. 5—9. (3.) *Israel was in a mighty consternation upon it,* ver. 10—12. (4.) *Moses endeavours to encourage them,* ver. 13, 14. 2. *The wonderful deliverance that God wrought for them, out of this distress.* 1. *Moses is instructed concerning it,* ver. 15—18. 2. *Lines that could not be forced are set between the camp of Israel, and Pharaoh's camp,* ver. 19, 20. 3. *By the divine power the Red sea is divided,* ver. 21. *and is made,* 1. *A lane to the Israelites, who marched safely through it,* ver. 22, 29. But, 2. *To the Egyptians it was made,* (1.) *An ambush into which they were drawn,* ver. 23—25. And, (2.) *A grave in which they were all buried,* ver. 26—28. Lastly, *The impressions this made upon the Israelites,* ver. 30, 31.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. 3. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. 4. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them, and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. 5. And it was told the king of Egypt, that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants, was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us? 6. And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him. 7. And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them. 8. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand. 9. But the Egyptians pursued after them, (all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his army) and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

Here is, 1. Instructions given to Moses concerning Israel's motions and encampments, which were so very surprising, that if Moses had not had express orders about them before, they would scarce have persuaded themselves to follow the pillar of cloud and fire. That therefore there might be no scruple or dissatisfaction about it, Moses is told before, 1. Whither they must go, ver. 1, 2. They were got to the edge of the wilderness, chap. xiii. 20. and one stage or two more would have brought them to Horeb, the place appointed for their serving God; but instead of going forward, they are ordered to turn short off, on the right-hand from-wards Canaan, and to march towards the Red sea. Where they were at Etham, there was no sea in their way to obstruct their passage, but God himself orders them into straits, which might give them an assurance, that when his purposes were served, he would without fail bring them out of those straits. Note, God some time raiseth difficulties in the way of the salvation of his people, that he may have the glory of subduing them, and helping his people over them.

2. What God designed in these strange orders. Moses would have yielded an implicit obedience, though he had given him no reason, but shall he hide from Moses the thing that he doth? No, Moses shall know, (1.) That Pharaoh has a design to ruin Israel, ver. 3. (2.) That therefore God has a design to ruin Pharaoh, and he takes this way to effect it, ver. 4. Pharaoh's politics would conclude that Israel was entangled in the wilderness, and so would become an easy prey to him, and that he might be the more apt to think so, God orders them into yet greater entanglements; also by turning them so much out of their road, he amazeth him yet more, and gives him further occasion to suspect them. And thus (saith God) *I will be honoured upon Pharaoh.* Note, 1. All men being made for the honour of their Maker, those whom he is not honoured by he will be honoured upon. 2. What seems to tend to the church's ruin is often over-ruled to the ruin of the church's enemies, whose pride and malice are fed by providence, that they may be ripened for destruction.

3. Pharaoh's pursuit of Israel, in which while he gratifies his own malice and revenge, he is furthering the accomplishment of God's counsels concerning him. It was told him that the people fled, ver. 5. Such a fright he was in when he gave them leave to go, that when the fright was a little over, he either forgot, or would not own that they departed with his consent, and therefore was willing it should be represented to him as a revolt from their allegiance. Thus what may easily be justified is easily condemned, by putting false colours upon it. Now hereupon,

1. He reflects upon it with regret, that he had connived at their departure. He and his servants, though it was with the greatest reason in the world that they had let Israel go, yet were now angry at themselves for it, *Why have we done thus?* (1.) It vexed

No. vi.

them that Israel had their liberty, that they had lost the profit of their labours, and the pleasure of chastising them. It is meat and drink to proud persecutors to trample upon the faints of the most High, and say to their souls, *bow down that we may go over,* and therefore it vexeth them to have their hands tied. Note, The liberty of God's people is a mighty grievance to their enemies, *Esth. v. 12, 13. Acts v. 17, 33.* (2.) It aggravated the vexation that they themselves had consented to it, thinking now, they might have hindered it, and that they needed not to have yielded, though they had stood it out to the last extremity. Thus God makes mens envy and rage against his people a torment to themselves, *Psal. cxii. 10.* It was well done to let Israel go, and what they would have reflected upon with comfort, if they had done it from an honest principle, but doing it by constraint, they called themselves a thousand fools for doing it, and passionately wish it undone again. Note, It is a very common thing, but a very ill thing for people to repent of their good deeds, their justice and charity, and even their repentance, is repented of. See an instance somewhat like this, *Jer. xxxiv. 10.*

2. He resolves if possible either to reduce them, or be revenged on them; in order to that he levies an army, musters all his force of chariots and horsemen, (ver. 17, 18.) (for it should seem he took no foot with him, because the king's business required haste) and thus he doubts not but to re-enslave them, ver. 6, 7. It is easy to imagine what a tofs Pharaoh was now in, roaring like a lion disappointed of his prey; how his proud heart aggravated the affront, swelled with indignation, scorned to be baffled, longed to be revenged; and now all the plagues are as if they had never been, he has quite forgot the sorrowful funerals of his first-born, he can think of nothing but making Israel feel his resentments; now he thinks he can be too hard for God himself, for otherwise he cannot imagine how he should conquer a people so dear to him. God gave him up to these passions of his own heart, and so hardened it. It is said, ver. 8, the children of Israel went out with a high hand, i. e. with a great deal of courage and bravery, triumphing in their enlargement, and resolved to break through the difficulties that lay in their way. But the Egyptians, ver. 9, pursued after them. Note, Those that in good earnest set their faces heaven-ward, and will live godly in Christ Jesus, must expect to be set upon by Satan's temptations and terrors. He will not tamely part with any out of his service, nor go out without raging, *Mar. ix. 36.*

10. And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lift up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD. 11. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? 12. Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness. 13. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

Here is, 1. The fright that the children of Israel were in when they perceived that Pharaoh pursued them, ver. 10. They knew very well the strength and rage of the enemy, and their own weakness; numerous indeed they were, but all foot, unarmed, undisciplined, disquieted by long servitude, and (which was worst of all) now penned up by the situation of their camp, so that they could not make their escape. On one hand was Pi-hahiroth, a range of craggy rocks unpassable; on the other hand were Migdol and Baal-zephon, which, some think, were forts and garrisons upon the frontiers of Egypt, before them was the sea, behind them were the Egyptians, so that there was no way open for them but upwards, and thence their deliverance came. Note, We may be in the way of our duty, following God, and hastening towards Heaven, and yet may be in great straits, *troubled on every side,* 2 Cor. iv. 8.

In this distress no marvel that they were sore afraid, their father Jacob was so in a like case, *Gen. xxxii. 7.* when without are fightings, it cannot be otherwise, but that within are fears; what therefore was the fruit of this fear! According as that was, the fear was good or evil.

1. Some of them cried out unto the Lord; their fear set them a praying, and that was a good effect of it. God brings us into straits, that he may bring us to our knees.

2. Others of them cried out against Moses; their fear set them a murmuring, ver. 11, 12. They give up themselves for lost, and as if God's arm were shortened all of a sudden, and he were not as able to work miracles to day as he was yesterday, they despair of deliverance, and can count upon nothing but *dying in the wilderness.*



*wilderness.* How inexcusable was their distrust! Did they not see themselves under the conduct and protection of a pillar from Heaven? And can Almighty power fail them, or infinite goodness be false to them? Yet this was not the worst, they quarrelled with Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, and in quarrelling with him fly in the face of God himself, and provoke him to wrath, whose favour was now the only succour they had to flee to. As the Egyptians were angry at themselves for the best deed they ever did, so the Israelites were angry at God for the greatest kindness that was ever done them, so gross are the absurdities of unbelief. They here express, 1. A sordid contempt of liberty, preferring servitude before it, only because it was attended with some difficulties. A generous spirit would have said, if the worst come to the worst (as we say) it is better die in the bed of honour than live in the chains of slavery; nay, under God's conduct they could not miscarry, and therefore they might say, better live God's freemen in the open air of a wilderness, than the Egyptians bondmen in the smoke of the brick-kilns: but because for the present they are a little embarrassed, they are angry that they were not left buried alive in their house of bondage. 2. Base ingratitude to Moses, who had been the faithful instrument of their deliverance: they condemn him as if he had dealt hardly and unkindly with them, whereas it was evident beyond dispute, that whatever he did, and however it issued, it was by direction from their God, and with design for their good. What they had said in a former passion, when they hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit, they repeat and justify in this, *we said in Egypt, Let us alone*, and it was ill said, yet more excusable, because then they had not had so much experience as they had now of God's wonderful appearances in their favours. But they had as soon forgot the miracles of mercy, as the Egyptians had forgot the miracles of wrath, and they, as well as the Egyptians, hardened their hearts at last to their own ruin; as Egypt after ten plagues, so Israel after ten provocations (of which this was the first) *Numb. xiv. 22.* were sentenced to die in the wilderness.

2. The seasonable encouragement that Moses gave them in this distress, *ver. 13, 14.* He answered not these fools according to their folly: God bore with the provocation they gave to him, and did not as he might justly have done chuse their delusions, and bring their fears upon them, and therefore Moses might well afford to pass by the affront they put upon him; instead of chiding them he comforts them, and with an admirable presence and composure of mind, not disheartened either by the threatenings of Egypt, or the tremblings of Israel, stills their murmuring with the assurance of a speedy and compleat deliverance, *Fear ye not.* Note, It is our duty and interest when we cannot get out of our troubles, yet to get above our fears, so as that they may only serve to quicken our prayers and endeavours, but may not prevail to silence our faith and hope.

1. He assures them that God would deliver them. That he would undertake their deliverance, *The Lord fight for you*, and that he would effect it, in the utter ruin of their pursuers. This Moses was confident of himself, and would have them to be so, though as yet he knew not how or which way it would be brought to pass. God had assured him that Pharaoh and his host should be ruined, and he comforts them with the same comforts wherewith he had been comforted.

2. He directs them to leave it to God in a silent expectation of the event, *stand still*, and think not to save yourselves either by fighting or flying, wait God's orders, and observe them, be not contriving what course to take, but follow your leader; wait God's appearances, and take notice of them, that you may see what fools you are to distrust him. Compose yourselves by an intire confidence in God into a peaceful prospect of the great salvation God is now about to work for you. Hold your peace, you need not so much as give a shout against the enemy (as *Josh. vi. 16.*) the work shall be done without any concurrence of yours. Note, 1. If God himself bring his people into straits, he will himself find out a way to bring them out again. 2. In times of great difficulty, and great expectation, it is our wisdom to keep our spirits calm, quiet, and sedate, for then we are in the best frame both to do our own work, and to *consider the work of God.* *Your strength is to sit still*, (*Isa. xxx. 7.*) *for the Egyptians shall help in vain, and threaten to hurt in vain.*

15. And the LORD said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. 16. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry-ground through the mids of the sea. 17. And I, behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 18. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. 19. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the

pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them. 20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

Here is, (1.) Direction given to Israel's leader. (1.) What he must do himself; he must for the present leave off praying, and apply himself to his business, *ver. 15.* *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* Moses, though he was assured of a good issue to the present distress, yet did not neglect prayer. We read not of one word he said in prayer, but he *lift up his heart* to God, the language of which God well understood, and took notice of. Moses's silent prayers of faith prevailed more with God, than Israel's loud outcries of fear, *ver. 10.* Note, 1. Praying, if be right, is *crying to God*, which speaks it the language both of a natural, and of an importunate desire. 2. There may be true crying to God by prayer, where the voice is not heard, as Hannah's, *1 Sam. i. 13.* But is God displeased with Moses for praying? No, he asks this question, *Wherefore criest thou unto me?* 1. To satisfy his faith. Wherefore shouldst thou press thy petition any further, when it is already granted, enough is said, speak no more of this matter; *I have accepted thy prayer*; so the Chaldee explains it. 2. To quicken his diligence. Moses has something else to do besides praying, he is to command the hosts of Israel, and it was now requisite he should be at his post. Every thing is beautiful in its season. (2.) What he must order Israel to do, Speak to them that they go forward. Some think Moses had prayed not so much for their deliverance, he was assured of that, as for the pardon of their murmurings, and God's ordering them to go forward was an intimation of the pardon. No going forward with any comfort, but in the sense of our reconciliation to God. Moses bid them stand still and expect orders from God, and now orders are given. They thought they must have been directed either to the right-hand, or to the left, No, saith God, speak to them to go forward, directly to the sea-side; as if there had lain a fleet of transport ships ready for them to embark in. Note, When we are in the way of our duty, though we meet with difficulties we must go forward, and not stand at a gaze, mind present work, and then leave the event to God, use means and trust him with the issue. (3.) What he might expect God to do. Let the children of Israel go as far as they can upon dry ground, and then God will divide the sea, and open a passage for them through it, *ver. 16, 17, 18.* God designs not only to deliver the Israelites, but to destroy the Egyptians, and the plan of his counsels is accordingly. (1.) He will shew favour to Israel, the waters shall be divided for them to pass through, *ver. 16.* The same power could have congealed the waters for them to pass over, but Infinite Wisdom chose rather to divide the waters for them to pass through, for that way of salvation is always pitched upon which is most humbling. Thus it is said with reference to this, *Isa. lxiii. 13, 14.* *He led them through the deep, as a beast goes down into the valley, and thus made himself an everlasting name.* (2.) He will get him honour upon Pharaoh. If the due rent of honour be not paid to the great landlord, by and from whom we have and hold our beings and comforts, he will distrain for it, and recover it. God will be a loser by no man.

In order to this, it is threatened, *ver. 17.* *I, behold I will harden Pharaoh's heart.* The manner of expression is observable, *I, behold I will do it.* I, that may, do it, so it is the language of his sovereignty, we may not contribute to the hardening of any man's heart, nor withhold any thing that we can do towards the softening of it, but God's grace is his own, he *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* I that can do it, so it is the language of his power, none but the *Almighty can make the heart soft*, *Job xxiii. 16.* nor can any but he make it hard. I that will do it, for it is the language of his justice; it is a righteous thing with God to put those under the impressions of his wrath that have long resisted the influences of his grace. It is spoken in a way of triumph over this obstinate and presumptuous rebel; *I, even I, will take an effectual course to humble him; he shall break that would not bend.* It is an expression like that, *Isa. i. 24.* *Ab, I will ease me of mine adversaries.*

(2.) A guard set upon Israel's camp, there where it now lay most exposed, which was *in the rear*, *ver. 19, 20.* *The angel of God*, whose ministry was made use of in the pillar of cloud and fire, went from *before the camp of Israel*, where they did not now need a guide, there was no danger of missing their way through the sea, nor needed they any other word of command, but to go forward, and it came behind them, where now they needed a guard, the Egyptians being just ready to seize the hindmost of them, and so was a wall of partition between them. There it was of use to the Israelites, not only to protect them, but to light them through the sea, and at the same time it confounded the Egyptians, so that they lost the sight of their prey, just then when they were ready to lay hands on it. The word and providence of God have a black and dark side towards sin and sinners, but a bright and pleasant side towards those that are Israelites indeed. That which is a favour of life unto life to some, is a favour of death unto death to others. This was not the first time that he who in the beginning



beginning *divided between light and darkness*, (Gen. i. 4.) and still forms both (*Isa. xlv. 7.*) had at the same time allotted darkness to the Egyptians, and light to the Israelites, a specimen of the endless distinction which will be made between the inheritance of the saints in light, and that utter darkness which will be the portion of hypocrites. Now and for ever God will separate between the precious and the vile.

21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east-wind all that night, and made the sea dry-land, and the waters were divided. 22. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry-ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them, to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24. And it came to pass, that in the morning-watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25. And took off their chariots-wheels, that they drove them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them, against the Egyptians. 26. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled against it: and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28. And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them: there remained not so much as one of them. 29. But the children of Israel walked upon dry-land in the midst of the sea: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 30. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians: and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore. 31. And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

We have here the history of that work of wonder which is so often mentioned both in the Old and New Testament, the dividing of the Red sea before the children of Israel. It was the terror of the Canaanites, *Josh. ii. 10.* the praise and triumph of the Israelites, *Psal. cxiv. 3.—cvi. 9.—cxxxvi. 13, 14.* It was a type of baptism, *1 Cor. x. 1.* Israel's passage through it was typical of the conversion of souls, *Isa. xi. 15.* and the Egyptians' perdition in it was typical of the final ruin of all impenitent sinners, *Rev. xx. 14.* Here is,

1. An instance of God's almighty power in the kingdom of nature, in dividing the sea, and opening a passage through the waters. It was a bay, or gulf, or arm of the sea, two or three leagues over, which was divided, *ver. 21.* The instituted sign made use of, was Moses's *stretching out his hand* over it, to signify, that it was done in answer to his prayer, for the confirmation of his mission, and in favour to the people which he led. The natural sign was a *strong east wind*, signifying that it was done by the power of God, whom the winds and the seas obey. If there be any passage in the book of *Job* which has reference to the miracles wrought for Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, it is that, *Job xxvi. 12. He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through Rahab*, (so the word is) that is Egypt. Note, God can bring his people thro' the greatest difficulties, and force a way where he doth not find it. The God of nature has not tyed himself to its laws, but when he pleases dispenseth with them, and then the fire doth not burn, nor the water flow.

2. An instance of his wonderful favour to his Israel. They went through the sea to the opposite shore (I cannot but think they did so, and not as some do, that they fetched a compass, and came out again on the same side), *ver. 22. they walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea*, *ver. 29.* And the pillar of cloud, *that glory of the Lord* being *re-reward* (*Isa. lviii. 8.*) that the Egyptians might not charge them *in the flank*, the waters were a wall to them (it is twice mentioned) *on their right hand, and on their left.* Moses and Aaron it is likely ventured first, into this untrodden path, and then all Israel after them; and this march through the paths of the great waters, would make their march afterwards through the wilderness less formidable. They needed not fear to follow God any whither, that had followed him through the sea. This march through the sea was in the night, and not a moon-shine night, for it was seven days after the full-moon, so that they had no light but what they had from the pillar of cloud

and fire. This made it the more awful; but where God leads us, he will light us, while we follow his conduct we shall not want his comforts.

This was done and recorded for the encouragement of God's people in all ages to trust in him in the greatest straits. What cannot he do that did this? What will not he do for those that fear and love him, who did this for these murmuring, unbelieving Israelites, who yet were *beloved for their fathers sakes*, and for the sake of the remnant among them? We find the saints long after making themselves sharers in the triumphs of this march, *Psal. lxxvi. 6. They went through the flood on foot, there did we rejoice in him*, and see how this work of wonder is improved, *Psal. lxxvii. 11, 16, 19.*

3. An instance of his just and righteous wrath upon his and his peoples enemies, the Egyptians. Observe here,

1. How they were infatuated; in the heat of their pursuit they went in after the Israelites *into the midst of the sea*, *ver. 23.* They thought, why might they not venture where Israel did? Once or twice the magicians of Egypt had done what Moses did with their enchantments, Pharaoh remembered that, but forgot how they were non-plussed at last. They were more advantageously provided with chariots and horses, while the Israelites were on foot. Pharaoh had said, *I know not the Lord*, and by this it appeared he did not, else he would not have ventured thus. None so bold as those that are blind. Rage against Israel made them thus daring, and inconsiderate: they had long hardened their own hearts, and now God hardened them to their ruin, and hid from their eyes the things that belonged to their peace and safety. *Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird*, *Prov. i. 17.* yet so blind were the Egyptians that they *hasted to the snare*, *Prov. vii. 23.* Note, The ruin of sinners is brought on by their own presumption, which hurries them headlong into the pit. They are self-destroyers.

2. How they were troubled and perplexed, *ver. 24, 25.* For some hours they marched through the divided waters, as safely and triumphantly as Israel did, not doubting but in a little time, to gain their point. But *in the morning watch, the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians and troubled them.* Something or other they saw or heard from the pillar of cloud and fire which put them into a mighty consternation, and gave them a sight of their ruin before it was brought upon them. Now it appeared that the *triumphing of the wicked is short*, and that God has ways to frighten sinners into despair, before he plungeth them into destruction, *He cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth.*

(1.) They had hector'd and boasted, as if the day were their own, but now they were troubled and dismayed, struck with a panic fear. (2.) They had driven furiously, but now they drove heavily, and found themselves plunged and embarrassed at every step, the way grew deep, their hearts grew sad, their wheels dropped off, and the axletrees failed. Thus can God check the violence of those that are in pursuit of his people. (3.) They had been flying upon the back of Israel, as the hawk upon the trembling dove, but now they cried, *Let us flee from the face of Israel*, which is become to them *like a torch of fire in a sheaf*, *Zech. xii. 6.* Israel is now all of a sudden become as much a terror to them as they had been to Israel. They might have let Israel alone and would not, now they would flee from the face of Israel, and cannot. Men will not be convinced, till it is too late, that those who meddle with God's people, *meddle to their own hurt*; when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment, the mighty men will in vain seek to shelter themselves under rocks and mountains *from the face of Israel*, and Israel's King, *Rev. vi. 16.* Compare with this story, *Job xxvii. 20, &c.*

3. How they were all drowned; as soon as ever the children of Israel were got safe to the shore, Moses was ordered to *stretch out his hand over the sea*, and thereby give a signal to the waters to close again, as before upon the word of command they had opened to the right and left, *ver. 26.* He did so, and immediately the waters returned to their place, and over-whelmed all the host of the Egyptians, *ver. 27, 28.* Pharaoh and his servants that had hardened one another in sin now fell together, and not one escaped. An ancient tradition saith, that Pharaoh's magicians Jannes and Jambres perished with the rest, as Balaam with the Midianites whom he had seduced, *Numb. xxxi. 8.* And now, (1.) God revenged upon the Egyptians the blood of the first-born whom they had drowned, and the principal is repaid with interest, it is recompensed double, full grown Egyptians for new-born Israelites, and the Lord is righteous; precious is his people's blood in his sight, *Psal. lxxii. 14.* (2.) God reckoned with Pharaoh for all his proud and insolent carriage toward Moses, his ambassador: mocking the messengers of the Lord, and playing the fool with them brings ruin without remedy: now God *got him honour upon Pharaoh*, looking upon that proud man and abasing him, *Job xl. 12.* Come and see the desolations he made, and write it, not in water, but with an iron pen in the rock for ever, Here lies that bloody tyrant that bid defiance to his maker, to his demands, threatenings, and judgments; a rebel to God, and a slave to his own barbarous passions; perfectly lost to humanity, virtue, and all true honour; here he lies buried in the deep, a perpetual monument of divine justice. Here he went down to the pit, tho' he was a terror of the mighty in the land of the living. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, *Ezek. xxxi. 18.*

Lastly,



Lastly, Here is the notice which the Israelites took of this wonderful work God wrought for them, and the good impressions it made upon them for the present.

1. They saw the Egyptians dead upon the sands, *ver. 30.* Providence so ordered it that the next tide threw up the dead bodies, (1.) for the greater disgrace of the Egyptians. Now the beasts and birds of prey were called to *eat flesh of the captains and mighty men*, *Rev. xix. 17, 18.* The Egyptians were very nice and curious in embalming and preserving the bodies of their great men, but here the utmost contempt is poured upon all the grandees of Egypt; see how they lie heaps upon heaps, as dung upon the face of the earth. (2.) For the greater triumph of the Israelites, and to affect them the more with their deliverance, for the eye affects the heart: See *Isa. lxvi. 24. They shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me.* Probably, they stripped the slain, and having borrowed jewels of their neighbours before, which (the Egyptians having by this hostile pursuit of them broke their faith with them) from henceforward they were not under any obligation to restore, they now got arms from them, which some think they were not before provided with. Thus when God *broke the heads of the Leviathan in pieces, he gave him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness*, *Psal. lxxiv. 14.*

2. The sight of this great work greatly affected them, and now they *feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses*, *ver. 31.* Now they were ashamed of their distrusts and murmurings, and in the good mind they were in they would never again despair of help from heaven, no not in the greatest straits, they would never again quarrel with Moses, nor talk of returning to Egypt. They were now baptized to Moses in the sea, *1 Cor. x. 2.* This great work which God wrought for them by the ministry of Moses, bound them effectually to follow his conduct under God. This confirmed their faith in the promises that were yet to be fulfilled, and being brought thus triumphantly out of Egypt, they did not doubt but to be in Canaan shortly, having such a God to trust to, and such a mediator between them and him. O that there had been such an heart in them as now there seemed to be! Sensible mercies when they are fresh, make sensible impressions, but with many they wear off presently: while they see God's works and feel the benefit of them they fear him and trust in him; but they soon forget his works, and then they slight him: How well were it for us if we were always in a good frame as we are in sometimes?

## CHAP. XV.

In this chapter, 1. Israel looks back upon Egypt with a song of praise for their deliverance. Here is, (1.) The song itself, *ver. 1—19.* (2.) The solemn singing of it, *ver. 20, 21.* 2. Israel marches forward in the wilderness, *ver. 22.* and there, 1. Their discontent at the waters of Marah, *ver. 23, 24.* and the relief granted them, *ver. 25, 26.* 2. Their satisfaction in the waters of Elim, *ver. 27.*

1. **T**HEN sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. 2. The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my fathers God, and I will exalt him. 3. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. 4. Pharaohs chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. 5. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. 6. Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. 7. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. 8. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together: the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. 10. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. 11. Who is like thee, O LORD, amongst the gods: who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12. Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habi-

tation. 14. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16. Fear and dread shall fall upon them, by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone: till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over which thou hast purchased. 17. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in: in the sanctuary, O LORD, which thy hands have established. 18. The LORD shall reign for ever and ever. 19. For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots, and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry-land in the mids of the sea. 20. And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels, and with dances. 21. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Having read how that compleat victory of Israel over the Egyptians was obtained, here we are told how it was celebrated; they that were to *hold their peace* while the deliverance was *in working*, chap. xiv. 14. must not *hold their peace* now it *was wrought*; the less they had to do then, the more they had to do now; if God accomplish deliverance by his own immediate power, it redounds so much the more to his glory. Moses, no doubt, by divine inspiration, indited this song, and delivered it to the children of Israel to be sung before they stirred from the place where they saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore. Observe, 1. They expressed their joy in God, and thankfulness to him by singing; it is almost natural to us thus to give vent to our joy, and the exultations of our spirit. By this instance it appears that the singing of Psalms as an act of religious worship was used in the church of Christ before the giving of the ceremonial law, therefore no part of it, nor abolished with it; singing is as much the language of holy joy, as praying is of holy desire. 2. Moses, that had gone before them through the sea, goes before them in the song, and composeth it for them. Note, Those that are active in public services should not be neuters in public praises. 3. Then when the mercy was fresh, and they were much affected with it, then they sang this song. Note, When we have received special mercy from God we ought to be quick and speedy in our returns of praise to him, before time and the deceitfulness of our own hearts lose the good impressions that have been made. David sang his triumphant song in the day that the Lord delivered him, *2 Sam. xxi. 1. Bis dat, qui cito dat.* 4. Then when they *believed the Lord*, chap. xiv. 31. then they sang this song: it was a song of faith; this connexion is observed, *Psal. cvi. 12. then believed they his words, they sang his praise: If with the heart man believes*, thus confession must be made.

Here is 1. The song itself: And it is (1.) An ancient song, the most ancient that we know of. (2.) A most admirable composition, the style lofty and magnificent, the images lively and proper, and the whole very moving. (3.) It is a holy song consecrated to the honour of God, and intended to exalt his name, and celebrate his praise, and his only, not in the least to magnify any man: holiness to the Lord is engraven on it, and to him they made melody in the singing of it. (4.) It is a typical song. The triumphs of the gospel church, in the downfall of its enemies, are expressed in the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb put together, and it is said to be sung upon a sea of glass, as this was upon the Red sea, *Rev. xv. 2, 3.*

Let us observe what Moses chiefly aims at in this song;

1. He gives glory to God, and triumphs in him; this is first in his intention, *ver. 1. I will sing unto the Lord.* Note, All our joy must terminate in God, and all our praises be offered up to him, the Father of lights and Father of mercies, *for he hath triumphed.* Note, All that love God triumph in his triumphs, what is his honour should be our joy. Israel rejoiceth in God, (*ver. 2.*) (1.) As their own God, and therefore their *strength, song, and salvation*: happy therefore the people whose God is the Lord, they need no more to make them happy; they have work to do, temptations to grapple with, and afflictions to bear, and are weak in themselves, but he strengthens them, his grace is their strength. They are oft in sorrow upon many accounts, but in him they have comfort; he is *their song*; sin, and death, and hell, threaten them, but he is, and will be *their salvation*: See *Isa. xii. 2.* (2.) As their fathers God. This they take notice of because being conscious to themselves of their own unworthiness and provocations, they had reason to think that what God had now done for them, was for their fathers sake, *Deut. iv. 37.* Note, The children of the covenant ought to improve their fathers relation



lation to God as their God, both for comfort and caution, and quickening. (3.) As a God of infinite power, *ver. 3. The Lord is a man of war*, i. e. well able to deal with all those that strive with their Maker, and will certainly be too hard for them. (4.) As a God of matchless and incomparable perfection, *ver. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?* This is pure praise, and a high expression of humble adoration. It is, (1.) A challenge to all other gods to compare with him: let them stand forth, and pretend their utmost, none of them dare make the comparison. Egypt was notorious for the multitude of its gods, but the God of the Hebrews was too hard for them and baffled them all, *Numb. xxxiii. 4. Deut. xxxii. 33.* The princes and potentates of the world are called gods, but they are feeble and mortal, none of them all comparable to Jehovah, the almighty and eternal God. (2.) It is a confession of his infinite perfection, as transcendent and unparalleled. Note, God is to be worshipped and adored as a being of such infinite perfection that there is none like him, nor any to be compared with him; as one that in all things hath and must have the preheminance, *Psal. lxxxix. 6.* More particularly, 1. *He is glorious in holiness*; his holiness is his glory. It is that attribute which angels adore, *Isa. vi. 3.* His holiness appeared in the destruction of Pharaoh, his hatred of sin, and his wrath against obstinate sinners: it appeared in the deliverance of Israel, his delight in the holy feed, and his faithfulness to his own promise. God is rich in mercy, that is his treasure, *glorious in holiness*, that is his honour. Let us always give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. 2. *He is fearful in praises*, that which is the matter of our praise, tho' it be joyful to the servants of God, is dreadful, and very terrible to his enemies, *Psal. lxvi. 1, 2, 3.* Or it directs us in the manner of our praising God, with a humble holy awe, *serve the Lord with fear*; even our spiritual joy and triumph must be balanced with a religious fear. 3. He is doing wonders, wondrous to all, being above the power and out of the common course of nature; especially wondrous to us, in whose favours they were wrought, who are so unworthy that we had little reason to expect them: They were wonders of power and wonders of grace, in both God was to be humbly adored.

2. He describes the deliverance they were now triumphing in; because the song was intended not only to express and excite their thankfulness for the present, but to preserve and perpetuate the remembrance of this work of wonder to after-ages. Two things were to be taken notice of,

(1.) The destruction of the enemy; the waters were divided, *ver. 8. The floods stood upright as an heap*, Pharaoh and all his hosts were buried in the waters. *The horse and his rider* could not escape, *ver. 1. the chariots, and the chosen captains*, *ver. 4.* they themselves went into the sea, and there they were overwhelmed, *ver. 19. The depths, the sea covered them*, and the proud waters went over the proud sinners, they sank like a stone, like lead, (*ver. 5, 10.*) under the weight of their own guilt, and God's wrath. Their sin had made them hard like a stone, and now they justly sink like a stone. Nay, *the earth itself swallowed them*, *ver. 12.* their dead bodies sunk into the sands upon which they were thrown up, which sucked them in. Those whom the Creator fights against, the whole creation is at war with.

All this was the Lord's doing, and his only. It was an act of power, *thy right hand, O Lord, not ours, has dashed in pieces the enemy*, *ver. 6.* It was with the blast of thy nostrils, *ver. 8.* and thy wind, *ver. 10.* and the stretching out of thy right hand, *ver. 12.* It was an instance of his transcendent power, *ver. 7.* in the greatness of thine excellency, and it was the execution of his justice, *thou sentest forth thy wrath*, *ver. 7.* And that which made this destruction of the Egyptians the more remarkable, was their pride and insolence, and strange assurance of success, *ver. 9. The enemy said, I will pursue.* Here is, (1.) Great confidence; when they pursue, they do not question but to overtake, and when they overtake, they do not question but to overcome, to obtain so clear a victory as to divide the spoil. Note, It is common for men to be most elevated with the hopes of success then when they are upon the brink of ruin, which makes their ruin so much the sorer: see *Isa. xxxvii. 24, 25.* (2.) Great cruelty, nothing but killing, and slaying, and destroying, and this will satisfy his lust, and a barbarous lust that is, which so much blood must be the satisfaction of. Note, It is a cruel hatred with which the church is hated; its enemies are bloody men. This is taken notice of here to shew, 1. That God resists the proud, and delights to humble those that lift up themselves; he that saith, I will, and I will, whether God will or no, shall be made to know, that wherein he deals proudly God is above him. 2. That those that thirst for blood, shall have enough of it. They that love to be destroying shall be destroyed, for we know who hath said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay.*

(2.) The protection and conduct of Israel, *ver. 13. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people*; led them forth out of the bondage of Egypt, led them forth out of the perils of the Red sea, *ver. 19. But the children of Israel went on dry land.* Note, The destruction of the wicked serves for a foil to set off the salvation of Israel, and to make it the more illustrious, *Isa. lxxv. 13.*

No. vi.

3. He sets himself to improve this wonderful appearance of God for them. 1. For their quickening to serve God; in consideration of this, (*ver. 2.*) *I will prepare him a habitation*: God having preserved them, and prepared a covert for them, under which they had been safe and easy, they resolve to spare no cost or pains for the erecting of a tabernacle to his honour, and there they will exalt him, and mention to his praise the honour he had got upon Pharaoh. God had now exalted them, making them great and high, and therefore they will exalt him, by speaking him great and high. Note, Our constant endeavour should be by praising his name and serving his interests to exalt God, and it is an advancement to us, to be so employed. 2. For their encouragement to trust in God, so confident is this Psalmist of the happy issue of the salvation which was so gloriously begun, that he looks upon it as in effect finished already, *ver. 13. Thou hast guided them to thy holy habitation.* Thou hast thus put them into the way to it, and wilt in due time bring them to the end of that way, for God's work is perfect; or, *thou hast guided them* to attend thy holy habitation in Heaven with their praises. Note, Those whom God takes under his conduct, he will guide to his holy habitation, in faith now, and in fruition shortly.

Two ways this great deliverance was encouraging,

1. It was such an instance of God's power, as would terrify their enemies, and quite dishearten them, *ver. 14, 15, 16.* The very tidings of the overthrow of the Egyptians, would be more than half the overthrow of all their other enemies; it would sink their spirits, and that would go far towards the sinking of their powers and interests; the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Canaanites, (with each of which nations Israel was to grapple) would be alarmed by it, would be quite dispirited, and would conclude it was in vain to fight against Israel, when a God of such power fought for them. It had this effect, the Edomites were afraid of them, *Deut. ii. 4.* so were the Moabites, *Numb. xiii. 3.* and the Canaanites, *Josh. ii. 9, 10.* — *v. 27. 1.* Thus God sent his fear before them, *Exod. xxiii.* and cut off the spirit of princes.

2. It was such a beginning of God's favour to them, as gave them an earnest of the perfection of his kindness. This was but in order to something further, *ver. 17. Thou shalt bring them in*: If he thus bring them out of Egypt, notwithstanding their unworthiness, and the difficulties that lay in the way of their escape, doubtless he will bring them into Canaan, for has he begun, so begun, and will he not make an end? Note, Our experiences of God's power and favour should be improved for the support of our expectations; thou hast, therefore not only thou canst, but we trust thou wilt, is good arguing. Observe, *Thou wilt plant them in the place which thou hast made for thee to dwell in.* Note, It is good dwelling where God dwells, in his church on earth, *Psal. xxvii. 4.* in his church in Heaven, *Joh. xvii. 24.* where he saith, This is my rest for ever, we should say, let it be ours.

Lastly, The great ground of the encouragement which they draw from this work of wonder is, *ver. 18. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.* They had now seen an end of Pharaoh's reign, but time it self shall not put a period to Jehovah's reign, which, like himself, is eternal, and not subject to change. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all God's faithful subjects, not only that he doth reign universally, and with an uncontested sovereignty, but that he will reign eternally, and there shall be no end of his dominion.

2. The solemn singing of this song, *ver. 20, 21.* Miriam (or Mary, it is the same name) presided in an assembly of the women, who (according to the softness of their sex, and the common usage of those times for expressing joy) with timbrels and dances, sung this song. Moses led the psalm, and gave it out for the men, and then Miriam for the women: famous victories were wont to be applauded by the daughters of Israel, *1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7.* so was this; when God brought Israel out of Egypt, it is said, *Mic. vi. 4.* he sent before them Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, tho' we read not of any thing remarkable that Miriam did but this. But those are to be reckoned great blessings to a people, that assist them and go before them in praising God.

22. So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? 25. And he cried unto the LORD, and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them. 26. And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes; I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD

2 X

LORD



LORD that healeth thee. 27. And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

It should seem it was with some difficulty that Moses prevailed with Israel to leave that triumphant shore, on which they sung the foregoing song. They were so taken up either with the sight, or with the song, or with the spoiling of the dead bodies, that they cared not to go forward, but Moses with much ado brought them from the Red sea, into a wilderness: the pleasures of our way to Canaan must not retard our progress, but quicken it, tho' we have a wilderness before us. Now here we are told, 1. That in the wilderness of Shur, they had no water, *ver.* 22. This was a fore trial to the young travellers, and an allay to their joy; thus God would train them up to difficulties: David in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, reaches forth towards God, *Psal.* lxxiii. 1.

2. That at Marah, they had water, but it was bitter, so that tho' they had been three days without water, they could not drink it, either because it was extremely unpleasant to the taste, or was likely to be prejudicial to their health, or was so brackish, that it rather increased their thirst than quenched it, *ver.* 23. Note, God can imbitter that to us which we promise our selves most satisfaction from, and often doth so in the wilderness of this world, that our wants and disappointments in the creature may drive us to the Creator, in whose favour alone true comfort is to be had. Now in this distress, (1.) The people fretted and quarrelled with Moses, as if he had done ill by them; *What shall we drink?* is all their clamour. *ver.* 24. Note, The greatest joys and hopes are soon turned into the greatest griefs and fears with them that live by sense only, and not by faith. (2.) Moses prayed, *ver.* 25. *He cried unto the Lord.* The complaints which they brought to him, he brought to God, on whom, notwithstanding his elevation, he owned a constant dependence. Note, It is the greatest relief of the cares of magistrates and ministers, when those under their charge make them uneasy, that they may have recourse to God by prayer; he is the guide of the church's guides, and to the chief shepherd, the under shepherds must upon all occasions apply themselves. (3.) God provided graciously for them; he directed Moses to a tree which he cast into the waters, and all of a sudden they were made sweet: some think this wood had a peculiar virtue in it for this purpose, because it is said, God shewed him the tree; God is to be acknowledged, not only in the creating of things useful for man, but in discovering their usefulness. Or perhaps this was only a sign, and not at all a means of the cure, no more than the brazen serpent, or Elifha's casting one cruse full of salt into the waters of Jericho. Some make this tree typical of the cross of Christ, which sweetens the bitter waters of affliction to all the faithful, and enables them to rejoice in tribulation. The Jews tradition is, that the wood of this tree was it self bitter, yet it sweetened the waters of Marah; the bitterness of Christ's sufferings and death alters the property of ours. (4.) Upon this occasion God came upon terms with them, and plainly told them now they were got clear of the Egyptians, and were entered into the wilderness, they were upon their good behaviour, and according as they carried themselves, so it would be well or ill with them; there he made a statute and an ordinance, and settled matters with them, here he proved them, *i. e.* there he put them upon the trial, admitted them as probationers for his favour. In short, he tells them, *ver.* 26. 1. What he expected from them, and that was in one word obedience. They must diligently *hearken to his voice, and give ear to his commandments*, that they might know their duty, and not transgress through ignorance; and they must take care in every thing to do that which was right in God's sight, and to *keep all his statutes*. They must not think, that now they were delivered from their bondage in Egypt, they had no lord over them, but were their own masters, no, therefore they must look upon themselves as God's servants, because he had *loosed their bonds*, *Psal.* cxvi. 16. *Luk.* i. 74, 75. 2. What they might then expect from him, *I will put none of these diseases upon thee*, *i. e.* I will not bring upon thee any of the plagues of Egypt. This intimates, that if they were rebellious and disobedient, the very plagues which they had seen inflicted upon their enemies should be brought upon them, so it is threatned, *Deut.* xxviii. 60. God's judgments upon Egypt, as they were mercies to Israel, opening the way to their deliverance, so they were warnings to Israel, and designed to awe them into obedience. Let not the Israelites think, that because God had thus highly honoured them in the great things he had done for them, and proclaimed them to all the world his favourites, that therefore he would connive at their sins, and let them do as they would: No, God is no respecter of persons; a rebellious Israelite shall fare no better than a rebellious Egyptian; and so they found to their cost before they got to Canaan. But if thou wilt be obedient, thou shalt be safe and happy; the threatning is implied only, but the promise is expressed, *I am the Lord that healeth thee*, and will take care of thy comfort wherever thou goest. Note, God is the great Physician. If we be kept well, it is he that keeps us, if we be made well, it is he that recovers us; he is our life, and the length of our days.

3. That at Elim they had good water, and enough of it, *ver.* 27. Though God may for a time order his people to encamp by the waters of Marah, yet that shall not always be their lot. See

how changeable our condition is in this world, from better to worse, from worse to better; let us therefore learn both how to be abased and how to abound, to rejoice as though we rejoiced not when we are full, and to weep as though we wept not when we are emptied. Here was for their supply twelve wells, one for every tribe, that they might not strive for water, as their fathers had sometimes done; and for their pleasure seventy palm-trees, under the shadow of which their great men might repose themselves. Note, God can find places of refreshment for his people even in the wilderness of this world, wells in the valley of Baca, lest they should faint in their mind with a perpetual fatigue; yet whatever our delights may be in the land of our pilgrimage, we must remember that we do but encamp by them for a time, but here we have no continuing city.

## C H A P. XVI.

*This chapter gives us an account of the victualling of the camp of Israel.* 1. *Their complaint for want of bread*, *ver.* 1—3. 2. *The notice God gave them before-hand of the provision he intended to make for them*, *ver.* 4—12. 3. *The sending of the manna*, *ver.* 13—15. 4. *The laws and orders concerning the manna.* 1. *That they should gather it daily for their daily bread*, *ver.* 16—21. 2. *That they should gather a double portion on the sixth day*, *ver.* 22—26. 3. *That they should expect none on the seventh day*, *ver.* 27—31. 4. *That they should preserve a pot of it for a memorial*, *ver.* 32.

1. **A**ND they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4. Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no. 5. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. 6. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt. 7. And in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: And what *are* we, that ye murmur against us? 8. And Moses said, *This shall be* when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: And what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD. 9. And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. 10. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. 11. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12. I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

A month's provision, it seems, the host of Israel took along with them out of Egypt, when they came thence on the 15th day of the first month, which by the 15th day of the second month was all spent; and here we have,

1. Their discontent and murmuring upon that occasion, *ver.* 2. 3. The whole congregation, the greatest part of them joined in this mutiny; it was not immediately against God that they murmured, but (which was equivalent) against Moses and Aaron, God's vicegerents among them. (1.) They count upon being killed in the wilderness; nothing less at the first word. If the Lord had been pleased to kill them, he could easily have done that in the Red sea; but then he preserved them, and now could as easily provide for them. It argues great distrust of God, and of his power and goodness, in every distress and appearance of danger to despair of life, and to talk of nothing but being killed presently. (2.) They invidiously



vidiously charge Moses with a design to starve them when he brought them out of Egypt, whereas what he had done was both by order from God, and with a desire of their welfare. Note, It is no new thing for the greatest kindnesses to be misinterpreted, and basely represented as the greatest injuries. The worst colours are sometimes put upon the best actions. Nay, (3.) They so far undervalue their deliverance, that they wished they had died in Egypt, nay, and died by the hand of the Lord too, *i. e.* by some of the plagues which cut off the Egyptians, as if it were not the hand of the Lord, but of Moses only that brought them into this hungry wilderness. It is common for people to say of that pain, or sickness, or sore, which they see not second causes of, *It is what pleaseth God*, as if that were not so likewise which comes by the hand of man, or some visible accident. Prodigious madness! They will rather die by the flesh-pots of Egypt, where they were at their own finding, than live under the conduct of the heavenly pillar in a wilderness, and be at God's finding: they wish to have fallen in the destruction of God's enemies, rather than to bear the fatherly discipline of his children. We cannot suppose they had any great plenty in Egypt, how largely soever they now talk of the flesh-pots, nor could they fear dying for want in the wilderness, while they had their flocks and herds with them, but discontent magnifies what is past, and vilifies what is present without regard to truth or reason. None talk more absurdly than murmurers. Their impatience, ingratitude, and distrust of God, was so much the worse, in that they had lately received such miraculous favours, and convincing proofs, both that God could help them in the greatest exigencies, and that really he *had mercy in store for them: see how soon they forgot his works, and provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea*, Psal. cvi. 7, 13. Note, Experiences of God's mercies greatly aggravate our distrusts and murmurings.

2. The care God graciously took for their supply; justly he might have said, I will rain fire and brimstone upon these murmurers, and consume them; but, quite contrary, he promiseth to rain bread upon them. Observe,

1. How God makes known to Moses his kind intentions, that he might not be uneasy at their murmurings, nor be tempted to wish he had let them alone in Egypt. (1.) He takes notice of the peoples complaints, ver. 12. *I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel*. As a God of pity, he took cognizance of their necessity, which was the occasion of their murmuring; as a just and holy God, he took cognizance of their base and unworthy reflections upon his servant Moses, and was much displeased with them. Note, When we begin to fret and be uneasy, we ought to consider, that God hears all our murmurings, though silent, and only the murmurings of the heart. Princes, parents, masters, do not hear all the murmurs of their inferiors against them, and it is well they do not, for perhaps they could not bear it, but God hears, and yet bears. We must not think, that because God doth not presently take vengeance on men for their sins, that therefore he doth not take notice of them, no, he hears the murmurings of Israel, and is grieved with this generation, and yet continues his care of them, as the tender parent of the froward child. (2.) He promiseth them a speedy, sufficient, and constant, supply, ver. 4. Man being made out of the earth, his Maker has wisely ordered him food out of the earth, Psal. civ. 14. But the people of Israel typifying the church of the first-born that are written in heaven, and born from above, and being themselves immediately under the conduct and government of heaven, receiving their charters, laws and commissions, from heaven, from heaven also they received their food: their law being given by the disposition of angels, they did also eat angels food. See what God designed in making this provision for them, *That I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no*. 1. Thus he tried whether they would trust him, and walk in the law of faith or no; whether they could live from hand to mouth, and (though now uneasy because their provisions were spent) could rest satisfied with no more but the bread of the day in its day, and depend upon God for fresh supplies to morrow. 2. Thus he tried whether they would serve him, and be ever dutiful to so good a master that provided so well for his servants; and hereby he made it appear to all the world in the issue, what an ungrateful people they were, whom nothing could oblige. Let favour be shewed to them, yet will they not learn righteousness, Isa. xxvi. 10.

2. How Moses made known these intentions to Israel, as God ordered him; here Aaron was his prophet, as he had been to Pharaoh; Moses directed Aaron what to *speake to the congregation of Israel*, ver. 4. and some think while Aaron was giving public summons to the congregation to *come near before the Lord*, Moses retired to pray, and the appearance of the glory of the Lord, ver. 10. was an answer to his prayer. They are called to come near, as Isa. i. 18. *Come and let us reason together*. Note, God condescends to give even murmurers a fair hearing; and shall we then despise the cause of our inferiors when they contend with us, Job xxxi. 13.

(1.) He convinceth them of the evil of their murmurings; they thought they reflected only upon Moses and Aaron, but here they are told that God was struck at through their sides. This is much insisted on, ver. 7, 8. *your murmurings are not against us*, then we would have been silent, but *against the Lord*, it was he that led you into these straits, and not we. Note, When we murmur

against those who are instruments of any uneasiness to us, whether justly or unjustly, we would do well to consider, how much we reflect upon God by it; men are but God's hand. They that quarrel with the reproofs and convictions of the word, and are angry at their ministers, when they are touched in a tender part, know not what they do, for therein they strive with their Maker. Let this for ever stop the mouth of murmuring, that it is daring impiety to murmur at God, because he is God; and gross absurdity to murmur at men, because they are but men.

(2.) He assures them of the supply of their wants; that since they had harped upon the flesh-pots so much, they should for once have flesh in abundance that evening, and bread next morning, and so every day from thenceforward, ver. 8, 12. Many there are of whom we say, that they are better fed than taught, but Israel was thus fed that they might be taught, *he led them about, he instructed him*, Deut. xxxii. 10. and as to this instance see Deut. viii. 3. *He fed thee with manna, that thou mightest know that man doth not live by bread only*. And besides that, here are two things mentioned which he intended to teach them by sending them manna, (1.) *By this ye shall know that the Lord hath brought you out from the land of Egypt*, ver. 6. That they were brought out of Egypt was plain enough, but so strangely sottish and short-sighted were they, that they said it was Moses that brought them out, ver. 3. Now God sent them manna to prove, that it was no less than an infinite power and goodness that brought them out, which could perfect what was begun. If Moses only had brought them out of Egypt, he could not thus have fed them, they must therefore own that was the Lord's doing, because this was so, and both were marvellous in their eyes, yet long after they had need to be told that *Moses gave them not this bread from heaven*, Joh. vi. 32. (2.) *By this ye shall know that I am the Lord your God*, ver. 12. This gave proof of his power as the Lord, and his particular favour to them as their God; when God plagued the Egyptians it was to make them know that he is the Lord, when he provided for the Israelites, it was to make them know that he was their God.

(3.) How God himself manifested his glory, to still the murmurings of the people, and to put a reputation upon Moses and Aaron, ver. 10. While Aaron was speaking, *the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud*. The cloud it self, one would think, was enough both to strike an awe upon them, and to give encouragement to them, yet in a few days that was grown so familiar to them that it made no impression upon them, unless it shone with an unusual brightness. Note, What God's ministers say to us is then likely to do us good, when the glory of God shines in with it upon our souls.

13. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. 14. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. 15. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat. 16. This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man, according to his eating: an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons, take ye every man for them which are in his tents. 17. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. 18. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating. 19. And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. 20. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses, but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank: And Moses was wroth with them. 21. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot it melted.

Now they begin to be immediately at God's finding,

1. He makes them a feast over night of delicate fowl, *feathered fowl*, Psal. lxxviii. 27. therefore not locusts, as some think; quails, or pheasants, or some wild fowl came up, and covered the camp, so tame that they might take up as many of them as they pleased. Note, God gives us of the good things of this life, not only for necessity, but for delight, that we may not only serve him, but serve him cheerfully.

2. Next morning he rained manna upon them, which was to be continued to them for their daily bread.

1. That which was provided for them was manna, which descended from the clouds, so that in some sense they might be said to live upon the air. It came down in dew that melted, and



yet was it self of such a consistency as to serve for nourishing strengthening food, without anything else: They called it manna, *man-hu*, what is this? Either what a poor thing is this? despising it: or, what a strange thing is this? admiring it: Or, it is a portion, no matter what it is, it is that which our God has allotted us, and we will take it and be thankful, *ver. 14, 15*. It was pleasant food; the Jews say, it was palatable to all, according as their gust and relish was. It was wholesome food, light of digestion, and very necessary (Dr Grew saith) to cleanse them from the Egyptian mange (or itch) with which he thinks it probable they were in the time of their bondage more or less infected, which a luxurious diet would have made contagious. By this spare and plain diet we are all taught a lesson of temperance, and forbidden to desire dainties and varieties.

2. They were to gather it every morning, *ver. 16. the portion of a day in his day*, *ver. 4*. Thus they must live upon daily providence, as the fowls of the air, of whom it is said, *that thou givest them they gather*, *Psal. civ. 28*. not to day for to morrow, *let the morrow take thought for the things of it self*: To this daily raining and gathering of manna our Saviour seems to allude when he teaches us to pray, *give us this day our daily bread*: We are hereby taught, 1. Prudence and diligence in providing food convenient for our selves and our households; what God graciously gives we must industriously gather, with quietness work and eat our own bread, not the bread either of idleness or of deceit. God's bounty leaves room for man's duty, it did so even when manna was rained; they must not eat till they have gathered. 2. Contentment and satisfaction with a sufficiency; they must gather *every man according to his eating*, enough is as good as a feast, and more than enough is as bad as a surfeit. They that have most have for themselves but food and raiment and mirth, and that have least generally have that or must have, so that, *he who gathers much has nothing over, and he who gathers little has no lack*. There is not so great a disproportion between one and another in the comfort and enjoyment of the things of this life, as there is in the property and possession of the things themselves. 3. Dependence upon providence, *let no man leave till morning*, *ver. 19*. but let them learn to go to bed and sleep quietly, though they had not a bit of bread in their tent, nor in all their camp, trusting God with the following day to bring them their daily bread. It was surer and safer in God's store-house than in their own, and would thence come to them sweeter and fresher; read with this *Mat. vi. 25. Take no thought for your life*, &c. See here the folly of hoarding: The manna that was laid up by some who thought themselves wiser and better husbands than their neighbours, and would provide in case it should fail next day, putrefied and bred worms, and became good for nothing. Note, That proves to be most wasted which is covetously and distrustfully spared. Those riches, are corrupted, *Jam. v. 2, 3*. Let us set our selves to think (1.) Of that great power of God which fed Israel in the wilderness, and made miracles their daily bread: What cannot this God do, who prepared a table in the wilderness, and furnished it richly even for those who questioned whether he could or no, *Psal. lxxviii. 19, 20*. Never was there such a market of provisions as this, where so many hundred thousand men were daily furnished *without money, and without price*. Never was there such an open house kept as God kept in the wilderness for forty years together, nor such free and plentiful entertainment given. The feast which Ahasuerus made to shew the riches of his kingdom, and the honour of his majesty, was nothing to this, *Ezra. i. 4*. It is said, *ver. 21. when the sun waxed hot it melted*, as if what was left were drawn up by the heat of the sun into the air to be the seed of the next day's harvest, and so from day to day. (2.) Of that constant providence of God which gives food to all flesh, for his mercy endures for ever, *Pf. cxxxvi. 25*. He is a great house-keeper that provides for all the creatures. The same wisdom, power, and goodness, that now brought food daily out of the clouds, doth, in the constant course of nature, bring food yearly out of the earth, and gives us all things richly to enjoy.

22. And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23. And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake, to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. 24. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. 25. And Moses said, Eat that to day; for to day is a sabbath unto the LORD: to day ye shall not find it in the field. 26. Six days ye shall gather it, but on the seventh day which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. 27. And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. 28.

And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? 29. See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. 30. So the people rested on the seventh day. 31. And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna: And it was like coriander-feed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Here is, 1. A plain intimation of the observing of a *seventh day sabbath*, not only before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, but before the bringing of Israel out of Egypt, and therefore *from the beginning*, *Gen. ii. 3*. If the sabbath had now been first instituted, how could Moses have understood what God said to him, *ver. 4*. concerning a double portion to be gathered on the sixth day without making any express mention of the sabbath? and how could the people so readily take the hint, *ver. 22*. even to the surprize of the rulers, before Moses had declared that it was done with regard to the sabbath, if they had not had some knowledge of the sabbath before? The setting apart of one day in seven for holy work, and in order to that for holy rest, was a divine appointment ever since God created man upon the earth, and the most ancient of positive laws: The way of sabbath sanctification is the good old way.

2. The double provision which God made for the Israelites, and which they were to make for themselves on the sixth day; God gave them *on the sixth day the bread of two days*, *ver. 24*. Appointing them to rest on the seventh day, he took care they should be no losers by it, and none ever will be losers by serving God: and on that day they were to fetch in enough for two days, and to prepare it, *ver. 23*. The law was very strict, that they must bake and seethe the day before, and not on the sabbath day: This doth not now make it unlawful for us to dress meat on the Lord's day, but directs us to contrive our family affairs so, as that they may be least our hindrance in the work of the sabbath. Works of necessity, no doubt, are to be done on that day, but it is desirable to have as little as may be to do of things necessary to the life that now is, that we may apply our selves the more closely to the one thing needful. That which they kept for their food on the sabbath day did not putrefy, *ver. 24*. when they kept it against a command *ver. 20*. it stank, when they kept it in obedience to a command it was sweet and good, for every thing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

3. The intermission of the manna on the seventh day; then God did not send it, and therefore they must not expect it, nor go out to gather, *ver. 26, 27*. This shewed that it did not proceed from natural causes, and that it was designed for a confirmation of the divine authority of the law which was to be given by Moses. Thus God took an effectual course to make them remember the sabbath day, they could not forget it, nor the day of preparation for it. Some (it seems) went out on the seventh day expecting to find manna, *ver. 27*. but they found none; for those that will find must seek in the appointed time; seek the Lord while he may be found. God, upon this occasion, said to Moses, *How long refuse ye to keep my commandments?* *ver. 28*. Why did he say this to Moses? he was not disobedient: No, but he was the ruler of a disobedient people, and God chargeth it upon him that he might the more warmly charge it upon them, and might take care that their disobedience should not be through any neglect or default of his. It was for going out to seek for manna on the seventh day that they were thus reproved. Note, 1. Disobedience even in a small matter is very provoking. 2. God is jealous for the honour of his sabbaths. If walking out to seek for food on the sabbath were thus reproved, walking out purely to find our own pleasure on that day cannot be justified.

32. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. 33. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations. 34. As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the testimony, to be kept. 35. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. 36. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.

God having provided manna to be his peoples food in the wilderness, and to be to them a continual feast, we are here told, 1. How the memory of it was preserved; an omer of this manna



manna was laid up in a golden pot, as we are told *Heb. ix. 4.* and kept before the testimony, or the ark, when it was afterwards made, *ver. 32, 33.* The preservation of this manna from waste and corruption was a standing miracle, and therefore the more proper memorial of this miraculous food. Posterity shall see the bread (saith God) *wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness,* see what sort of food it was, and how much each man's daily proportion of it was, that it might appear they were neither kept to hard fare, nor to short allowance, and then judge between God and Israel, whether they had any cause given them to murmur and find fault with their commons, and whether they and their seed after them had not a great deal of reason with thankfulness to own God's goodness to them. Note, Eaten bread must not be forgotten; God's miracles and mercies are to be had in everlasting remembrance for our encouragement to trust in him at all times.

2. How the mercy of it was continued, as long as they had occasion for it. The manna never ceased till they came to the borders of Canaan where there was bread enough and to spare, *ver. 35.* See how constant the care of providence is; seed time and harvest fail not while the earth remains: Israel was very provoking in the wilderness, yet the manna never failed them; thus still God causeth his rain to fall on the just and unjust.

The manna is called spiritual meat, *1 Cor. x. 3.* because it was typical of spiritual blessings in heavenly things; Christ himself is the true manna, the bread of life, of which that was a figure, *John vi. 49, 50, 51.* The word of God is the manna by which our souls are nourished, *Mat. iv. 4.* The comforts of the Spirit are hidden manna, *Rev. ii. 17.* These come from heaven as the manna did, are the support and comfort of the divine life in the soul while we are in the wilderness of this world; it is food for Israelites, for those only that follow the pillar of cloud and fire; it is to be gathered, Christ in the word is to be applied to the soul, and the means of grace used; we must every one of us gather for ourselves, and gather in the morning of our days, the morning of our opportunities, which if we let slip it may be too late to gather. The manna they gathered must not be hoarded up but eaten; they that have received Christ must by faith live upon him, and not receive his grace in vain: there was manna enough for all, enough for each, and none had too much, so in Christ there is a compleat sufficiency and no superfluity. But they that did eat manna hungered again, died at last, and with many of them God was not well pleased, whereas they that feed on Christ by faith shall never hunger, and shall die no more, and with them God will be for ever well-pleased: the Lord evermore give us this bread!

## C H A P. XVII.

Two passages of story are recorded in this chapter,

1. The watering of the host of Israel. (1.) In the wilderness they wanted water, *ver. 1.* (2.) In their want they chide with Moses, *ver. 2, 3.* (3.) Moses cried to God, *ver. 4.* (4.) God ordered him to smite the rock, and fetch water out of that, and he did so, *ver. 5, 6.* (5.) The place named from it, *ver. 7.*
2. The defeating of the host of Amalek. 1. The victory obtained by the prayer of Moses, *ver. 8—12.* 2. By the sword of Joshua, *ver. 13.* 3. A record kept of it, *ver. 14, 16.* And these things which happened to them for ensamples are written for our instruction in our spiritual journey and warfare.

1. **A**ND all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. 2. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide you with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD? 3. And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us, and our children, and our cattle with thirst? 4. And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. 5. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel: and thy rod wherewith thou smote the river, take in thine hand, and go. 6. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

No. vi.

Here is, 1. The strait that the children of Israel were in for want of water; once before they were in the like distress, and now a second time, *ver. 1.* They journeyed according to the commandment of the Lord, led by the pillar of cloud and fire, and yet they came to a place where there was no water for them to drink. Note, We may be in the way of our duty, and yet may meet with troubles, which providence brings us into for the trial of our faith, and that God may be glorified in our relief.

2. Their discontent and distrust in this strait: it is said, *ver. 3.* they thirsted there for water: if they had no water to drink they must needs thirst, but this intimates not only that they wanted water, and felt the inconvenience of that want, but that their passion sharpened their appetite, and they were violent and impatient in their desire; their thirst made them outrageous: natural desires and those that are most craving, have need to be kept under the check and conduct of religion and reason.

See what was the language of this inordinate desire.

1. They challenged Moses to supply them, *ver. 2.* Give us water that we may drink, demanding it as a debt, and strongly suspecting that he was not able to discharge it. Because they were supplied with bread, they insist upon it that they must be supplied with water too; and indeed to those that by faith and prayer live a life of dependence upon God, one favour is an earnest of another, and may be humbly pleaded, but the unthankful and unbelieving have reason to think, that the abuse of former favours is the forfeiture of further favours, *Let not them think that they shall receive any thing,* *Jam. i. 7.* yet they are ready to demand every thing.

2. They quarrelled with him for bringing them out of Egypt, as if instead of delivering them he designed to murder them, than which nothing could be more base and invidious, *ver. 3.* Many that have not only designed well but done well for their generation, have had their best services thus misconstrued, and their patience thereby tried by unthinking unthankful people. To such a degree their malice against Moses rose, that they were almost ready to stone him, *ver. 4.* Many good works he had shewed them; and for which of these would they stone him? *Job. x. 32.* Ungoverned passions provoked by the crossing of unbridled appetites, sometimes make men guilty of the greatest absurdities, and do like madmen that cast firebrands, arrows, and death, among their best friends.

3. They began to question whether God were with them or no, *ver. 7.* they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not? Is Jehovah among us by that name by which he made himself known to us in Egypt: they question his essential presence, whether there be a God or no; his common providence, whether that God govern the world; and his special promise, whether he would be as good as his word to them. This is called their tempting God, which signifies not only a distrust of God in general, but a distrust of him after they had received such experiments of his power and goodness, for the confirmation of his promise: they do in effect suppose that Moses was an impostor, Aaron a deceiver; the pillar of cloud and fire a meer sham and illusion, which imposed upon their senses, that long series of miracles which had rescued them, saved them, and fed them, a chain of cheats, and the promise of Canaan a banter upon them, it was all so if the Lord were not among them. Note, It is a great provocation to God for us to question his presence, providence, or promise, especially for his Israel to do it, who are so much obliged to trust him.

3. The course that Moses took when he was thus set upon, and insulted. (1.) He reproveth the murmurers, *ver. 2.* Why chide you with me? Observe how mildly he answered them; it was well he was a man of invincible meekness, else their tumultuous carriage would have lost him the possession of his own soul: It is folly to answer passion with passion, for that makes ill worse, but soft answers turn away wrath: He shewed them whom their murmurings reflected upon, and that the reproaches they cast on him fell on God himself, *ye tempt the Lord, i. e.* by distrusting his power you try his patience, and so provoke his wrath. (2.) He made his complaint to God, *ver. 4.* Moses cried unto the Lord: this servant came and shewed his Lord all these things, *Luk. xiv. 21.* When men unjustly censure us and quarrel with us, it will be a great ease to us to go to God, and by prayer lay the case before him, and leave it with him: if men will not hear us, God will; if their ill carriage towards us ruffle our spirits, God's consolations will compose them. Moses begs of God to direct him what he should do, for he was utterly at a loss; he could not of himself either supply their want, or pacify their tumult, God only could do it. He pleads his own peril, they be almost ready to stone me, Lord, if thou hast any regard to the life of thy poor servant interpose now.

4. God's gracious appearance for their relief, *ver. 5, 6.* He orders Moses to go on before the people, and venture himself in his post, though they spoke of stoning him. He must take his rod with him, not (as God might justly have ordered) to summon some plague or other to chastise them for their distrust and murmuring, but to fetch water for their supply. O the wonderful patience and forbearance of God towards provoking sinners! He leads those with benefits that make him to serve with their sins, maintains those that are at war with him, and reaches out the



the hand of his bounty to those that lift up the heel against him. Thus he teacheth us, if our enemy hunger to feed him, and if he thirst, as Israel did now, *to give him drink*, Rom. xii. 20. Matth. v. 45. Will he fail those that trust him, when he was so liberal even to those that tempted him? If God had only shewed Moses a fountain of water in the wilderness, as he did to Hagar, not far from hence, *Gen. xxi. 19.* that had been a great favour, but that he might shew his power as well as his pity, and make it a miracle of mercy, he gave them water out of a rock. He directed Moses whither to go, appointed him to take of the elders of Israel with him, to be witnesses of what was done, that they might themselves be satisfied, and might satisfy others of the certainty of God's presence with them; he promised to meet him there in the cloud of glory, to encourage him, ordered him to smite the rock, which he did, and immediately water came out of it in great abundance, which ran throughout the camp in streams and rivers, *Psal. lxxviii. 15, 16.* and followed them wherever they went in that wilderness: it is called a fountain of water, *Psal. cxiv. 8.* God shewed his care of his people in giving them water when they wanted it: his own power in fetching it out of a rock, and put an honour upon Moses in appointing the water to flow out upon his smiting of the rock. This fair water that came out of the rock is called honey and oil, *Deut. xxxii. 13.* because the people's thirst made it doubly pleasant; coming when they were in extreme want, it was like honey and oil to them. It is probable that people digged canals for the conveyance of it, and pools for the reception of it, as long after passing through the valley of Baca, they made it a well, *Psal. lxxxiv. 6.* *Num. xxi. 18.* Let this direct us to live in a dependence (1.) Upon God's providence even in the greatest straits and difficulties. God can open fountains for our supply there where we least expect them, *Waters in the wilderness*, *Isa. xliii. 20.* because he makes a way in the wilderness, *ver. 19.* Those who in this wilderness keep to God's way may trust him to provide for them, while we follow the pillar of cloud and fire, surely goodness and mercy shall follow us, like the water out of the rock. (2.) Upon Christ's grace, *that rock was Christ*, *1 Cor. x. 4.* The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to *rivers of living water*, *Joh. vii. 38, 39.*—iv. 14. These flow from Christ, who is the rock, smitten by the law of Moses, for he was made under the law. Nothing will supply the needs and satisfy the desires of a soul but water out of this rock, this fountain opened. The pleasures of sense are puddle water, spiritual delights are rock water, so pure, so clear, so refreshing, rivers of pleasure.

5. A new name was upon this occasion given to the place preserving the remembrance, not of the mercy of their supply, the water that followed them was sufficient to do that, but of the sin of their murmuring, *Massah*, temptation, because they tempted God, *Meribah*, strife, because they chid with Moses, *ver. 7.* There was thus a remembrance kept of sin, both for the disgrace of the sinners themselves; sin leaves a blot upon the name: and for warning to their seed to take heed of sinning after the similitude of their transgression.

8. Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand. 10. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill. 11. And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12. But Moses hands were heavy, and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon: and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. 14. And the LORD said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. 15. And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-nissi. 16. For he said, Because the LORD hath sworn, *that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*

We have here the story of the war with Amalek, which we may suppose was the first that was recorded in the book of the wars of the Lord, *Numb. xxi. 14.* Amalek was the first of the nations that Israel fought with, *Num. xxiv. 20.* Observe, 1. Amalek's attempt; they came out and fought with Israel, *ver. 8.* The Amalekites were the posterity of Esau, who hated Jacob because of the birthright and blessing, and this was an effort of the hereditary enmity; a malice that run in the blood, and perhaps was now exasperated by the working of the promise towards

an accomplishment. Consider this, (1.) As Israel's affliction; they had been quarrelling with Moses, *ver. 2.* and now God sends Amalekites to quarrel with them; wars abroad are the just punishment of strifes and discontents at home. (2.) As Amalek's sin, so it is reckoned, *Deut. xxv. 17, 18.* They did not boldly front them as a generous enemy, but without any provocation given by Israel, or challenge given to them, basely fell upon their rear, and smote them that were faint and feeble, and could make neither resistance nor escape: herein they bid defiance to that power which had so lately ruined the Egyptians; but in vain did they attack a camp guarded and victualled by miracles; verily they knew not what they did. 2. Israel's engagement with Amalek, in their own necessary defence against the aggressors; and there,

1. The post assigned to Joshua, of whom this is the first mention: he is nominated commander in chief in this expedition, that he might be trained up to the services he was designed for after the death of Moses, and be a *man of war from his youth*. He is ordered to draw out a detachment of choice men out of the thousands of Israel, and to drive back the Amalekites, *ver. 9.* When the Egyptians pursued them, Israel must stand still and see what God would do, but now it was required that they should bestir themselves. Note, God is to be trusted in the use of means.

2. The post assumed by Moses, *ver. 9.* *I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand:* see how God qualifies his people for, and calls them to various services for the good of his church; Joshua fights, Moses prays, and both minister to Israel. Moses went up to the top of the hill, and placed himself probably so as to be seen by Israel, and there he held up the rod of God in his hand, that wonder-working rod which had summoned the plagues of Egypt, and under which Israel passed out of the house of bondage. This rod Moses held up (1.) To Israel to animate them; the rod was held up as the banner, to encourage the soldiers, who might look up and say, yonder is the rod, and yonder the hand that used it when such glorious things were wrought for us. Note, It tends much to the encouragement of faith to reflect upon the great things God has done for us, and review the monuments of his favour.

(2.) To God by way of appeal to him; Is not the battle the Lord's? Is not he able to help, and engaged to help? Witness this rod, the voice of which thus held up was that, *Isa. li. 9, 10.* *Put on strength, O arm of the Lord, art not thou it that hath cut Rahab?* Moses was not only a standard-bearer, but an intercessor, pleading with God for success and victory. Note, When the host goes forth against the enemy, earnest prayers should be made to the God of hosts for his presence with them. It is here the praying legion that proves the thundering legion. There in Salem, in Sion where prayers were made, there the victory was won, *there brake he the arrows of the bow*, *Psal. lxxvi. 2, 3.*

Observe, (1.) How Moses was tired, *ver. 12.* *his hands were heavy;* the strongest arm will fail with being long extended, it is God only whose hand is stretched out still. We do not find that Joshua's hands were heavy in fighting, but Moses's hands were heavy in praying; the more spiritual any service is, the more apt we are to fail and flag in it: praying work, if done with due intention of mind, and vigour of affection, will be found hard work, and though the spirit be willing to it, the flesh will be weak: our great intercessor in heaven fainteth not neither, is weary, though he attends continually to this very thing.

(2.) What influence the rod of Moses had upon the battle, *ver. 11.* *when Moses held up his hand in prayer* (so the Chaldee explains it) *Israel prevailed*, but *when he let down his hand from prayer Amalek prevailed.* To convince Israel that the hand of Moses (with whom they had just now been chiding) contributed more to their safety than their own hands, his rod than their sword, the success rises and falls, as Moses lifts up or lets down his hand. It seems the scale wavered for some time before it turned on Israel's side; even the best cause must expect disappointments as an allay to its successes; though the battle be the Lord's, Amalek may prevail for a time, the reason was, Moses let down his hand. Note, The church's cause is ordinarily more or less successful, according as the church's friends are more or less strong in faith, and fervent in prayer.

(3.) The care that was taken for the support of Moses. When he could not stand any longer, he sat down, not in a chair of state, but upon a stone, (*ver. 12.*) when he could not hold up his hands he would have them held up; Moses the man of God is glad of the assistance of Aaron his brother, and Hur, who some think was his brother-in-law, the husband of Miriam. We should not be shy either of asking help from others, or giving help to others, for we are members one of another. Moses's hands, thus stayed, were steady till the going down of the sun, and though it was with much ado that he held out, yet his willing mind was accepted. No doubt it was a great encouragement to the people to see Joshua before them in the field of battle, and Moses above them upon the top of the hill; Christ is both to us, our Joshua, the captain of our salvation that fights our battles, and our Moses who in the upper world ever lives making intercession, that our faith fail not.



3. The defeat of Amalek. Victory had hovered a-while between the camps, sometimes Israel prevailed, and sometimes Amalek, but Israel carried the day, *ver. 13.* Though Joshua fought upon great disadvantages, his soldiers undisciplined, ill armed, long enured to servitude; and apt to murmur, yet by them God wrought a great salvation, and made Amalek pay dear for their insolence. Note, Weapons formed against God's Israel cannot prosper long, and shall be broke at last. The cause of God and his Israel will be victorious. Though God gave the victory, yet it is said Joshua discomfited Amalek, because Joshua was a type of Christ, and of the same name, and in him it is that we are more than conquerors. It was his arm alone that spoiled principalities and powers, and routed all their force.

4. The trophies of this victory set up.

1. Moses took care that God should have the glory of it, *ver. 15.* instead of setting up a triumphal arch to the honour of Joshua (though it had been policy enough to put marks of honour upon him) he builds an altar, to the honour of God, and we may suppose it was not an altar without sacrifice, but that which is most carefully recorded is the inscription upon the altar, *Jehovah-nissi, The Lord is my banner,* which probably refers to the lifting up of the rod of God as a banner in this action. The presence and power of Jehovah was the banner under which they lifted, by which they were animated, and kept together, and therefore which they erected in the day of their triumph. In the name of our God we must always lift up our banners, *Psal. xx.*

5. It is fit he that doth all the work should have all the praise.

2. God took care that posterity should have the comfort and benefit of it. *Write this for a memorial,* not in loose papers, but in a book, *write it,* and then *rehearse it in the ears of Joshua,* let him be intrusted with this memorial to transmit it to the generations to come. Moses must now begin to keep a diary or journal of occurrences, and it is the first mention of writing we find in scripture, (and perhaps the command was not given till after the writing of the law upon the tables of stone) *write it in perpetuum rei memoriam,* that which is written remains.

(1.) Write what had been done, what Amalek had done against Israel, write in gall their bitter hatred, write in blood their cruel attempts, let them never be forgotten. Nor yet what God had done for Israel in saving them from Amalek. Let ages to come, know that God fighteth for his people, and *he that toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye.*

(2.) Write what should be done. (1.) That in process of time Amalek should be totally ruined, and rooted out, *ver. 14.* that it should be remembered only in history. Amalek would have cut off the name of Israel that that might be no more in remembrance, *Psal. lxxxiii. 4, 7.* and therefore God not only disappoints them in that, but cuts off their name. Write it for the encouragement of Israel whenever the Amalekites are an annoyance to them, that Israel will at last undoubtedly triumph in the fall of Amalek. This sentence was executed in part by Saul, *1 Sam. xv.* and compleatly by David, *chap. xxx. 2 Sam. i. 1.—viii. 12.* and after his time we never read so much as of the name of Amalek. (2.) That in the mean time God would have a continual controversy with them, *ver. 16.* *Because their hand is against the throne of the Lord,* i. e. against the camp of Israel in which the Lord ruled, which was the place of his sanctuary, and is therefore called a glorious high throne from the beginning, *Jer. xvii. 12.* Therefore the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. This was written for direction to Israel, never to make any league with the Amalekites, but to look upon them as irreconcilable enemies doomed to ruin. Amalek's destruction was typical of the destruction of all the enemies of Christ and his kingdom. *Whoever make war with the Lamb, the Lamb will overcome them.*

## C H A P. XVIII.

This chapter is concerning Moses himself, and the affairs of his own family. 1. Jethro his father-in-law brings him his wife and children, *ver. 1—6.* 2. Moses entertains his father-in-law with great respect, *ver. 7.* with good discourse, *ver. 8—11.* with a sacrifice and a feast, *ver. 12.* 3. Jethro adviseth him about the management of his business as a judge in Israel, to take pious judges in to his assistance, *ver. 13—23.* and Moses after some time takes his counsel, *ver. 24—26.* and so they part, *ver. 27.*

1. **W**hen Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt: 2. Then Jethro, Moses father in law, took Zipporah Moses wife, after he had sent her back, 3. And her two sons, of which the name of the one was Gershom (for he said, I have been an alien in strange land) 4. And the name of the other was Eliezer (for the God of my father, said he, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword

of Pharaoh) 5. And Jethro, Moses father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God. 6. And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

This passage may very well be allowed to happen as it is placed here before the giving of the law, and not as some place it at *Numb. x. 11.* Sacrifices were offered before, in these here mentioned, *ver. 12.* it is observable that Jethro is said to take them, not Aaron. And as to Jethro's advising Moses to constitute judges under him, though it is intimated, *ver. 13.* that the occasion of his giving that advice was *on the morrow,* yet it doth not follow but that Moses's settling of that affair might be some time after, when the law was given, as it is placed, *Deut. i. 9.* it is plain Jethro himself would not have him make this alteration in the government, till he had received instructions from God about it. *ver. 23.* which he did not till some time after.

Jethro comes, 1. To congratulate the happiness of Israel, and particularly, the honour of Moses his son-in-law, and now Jethro thinks himself well paid for all the kindness he had shewed to Moses in his distress, and his daughter better matched than he could have expected. Jethro could not but hear what all the country rang of, the glorious appearances of God for his people Israel, *ver. 1.* and he comes to enquire, and inform himself more fully thereof, see *Psal. cxi. 2.* and to rejoice with them, as one that had a true respect both for them and for their God. Though he, as a Midianite, was not to share with them in the promised land, yet he shared with them in the day of their deliverance. We may thus make others comforts our own, by taking pleasure as God doth in the prosperity of the righteous. 2. To bring Moses's wife and children to him. It seems he had sent them back, probably from the inn where his wife's loathsomeness to have her son circumcised, had like to have cost him his life, *chap. iv. 25.* fearing lest they should be further his hindrance, he sent them home to his father-in-law; he foresaw what discouragements he was likely to meet with in the court of Pharaoh, and therefore would not take any with him in his own family. He was of that tribe that said to his father, *I have known him,* when service was to be done for God, *Deut. xxxiii. 9.* Thus Christ's disciples, when they were to go upon an expedition, not much unlike that of Moses, were to forsake wife and children, *Matth. xix. 29.* But though there might be a reason, for the separation that was between Moses and his wife for a time, yet they must come together again, as soon as ever they could with any convenience. It is the law of the relation. *Ye husbands dwell with your wives,* *1 Pet. iii. 7.* Jethro, we may suppose, was glad of his daughter's company, and fond of the children, yet he would not keep her from her husband, nor them from their father, *ver. 5, 6.* Moses must have his family with him, that while he ruled the church of God, he might set a good example of prudence in family government, *1 Tim. iii. 5.* Moses had now a great deal both of honour and care put upon him, and it was fit his wife should be with him to share with him in both.

Notice is taken of the significant names of his two sons.

1. The eldest was called Gershom, *ver. 3.* A stranger, designing thereby not only a memorial of his own condition, but a memorandum to his son of his, for we are all strangers upon earth, as all our fathers were. Moses had a great uncle almost of the same name, Gershon, a stranger, for though he was born in Canaan, *Gen. xlv. 11.* yet even there the patriarchs confessed themselves strangers.

2. The other he called Eliezer, *ver. 4.* *My God a help,* as we translate it, it looks back to his deliverance from Pharaoh, when he made his escape after the slaying of the Egyptian, but if this were (as some think) the son that was circumcised in the inn as he was going, I would rather translate it, so as to look forward, which the original will bear. *The Lord is mine help, and will deliver me* from the sword of Pharaoh, which he had reason to expect would be drawn against him, when he was going to fetch Israel out of bondage. Note, When we are undertaking any difficult service for God in our generation, it is good for us to encourage ourselves in God as our help: he that has delivered, doth and will.

7. And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him, and they asked each other of their welfare: and they came into the tent. 8. And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, and all the travel that had come upon them by the way, and how the LORD delivered them. 9. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel: whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10. And Jethro said



said, Blessed be the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, *he was above them.* 12. And Jethro Moses father in law took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses father in law before God.

Observe here, 1. The kind greeting that was between Moses and his father-in-law, *ver. 7.* Though Moses was a prophet of the Lord, a great prophet, and king in Jethurun, yet he shewed a very humble respect to his father-in-law. However God in his providence is pleased to advance us, we must make conscience of giving honour to whom honour is due, and never look with disdain upon poor relations. Those that stand high in the favour of God, are not thereby discharged from the duty they owe to men, nor will that justify them in a stately, haughty carriage. Moses went out to meet Jethro, *did obeisance to him, and kissed him.* Religion doth not destroy good manners. *They asked each other of their welfare.* Even the kind how-do-you's that pass between them are taken notice of, as the expressions and improvements of mutual love and friendship. 2. The narrative that Moses gave his father-in-law of the great things God had done for Israel, *ver. 8.* This was one thing Jethro came for, to know more fully and particularly what he had had the general report of. Note, *Talk of God's wondrous works is profitable talk, it is good and to the use of edifying,* Psal. cv. 2. compare Psal. cxlv. 11, 12. Asking and telling news, and discoursing of it is not only an allowable entertainment of conversation, but is capable of being turned to a very good account, by taking notice of God's providence, and the operations and tendencies of that in all occurrences. 3. The impressions this narrative made upon Jethro. (1.) He congratulated God's Israel, *ver. 9.* *Jethro rejoiced.* He not only rejoiced in the honour done to his son-in-law, but in *all the goodness done to Israel,* *ver. 9.* Note, Public blessings are the joy of public spirits. While the Israelites were themselves murmuring, notwithstanding all God's goodness to them, here was a Midianite rejoicing. This was not the only time that the faith of Gentiles shamed the unbelief of the Jews, see *Matth. viii. 10.* Standers-by were more affected with the favours God had shewed to Israel than they were that received them. (2.) He gave the glory to Israel's God, *ver. 10.* *Blessed be Jehovah* (for by that name he is now known) *who hath delivered you, Moses and Aaron, out of the hand of Pharaoh,* that though he designed your death, he could not affect it, and by your ministry has delivered the people. Note, Whatever we have the joy of, God must have the praise of.

(3.) His faith was hereby confirmed, and he took this occasion to make a solemn profession of it, *ver. 11.* *Now know I that Jehovah is greater than all gods.* Observe, 1. The matter of his faith. That the God of Israel is greater than all pretenders, all false and counterfeit deities, that usurp divine honour, he silenceth them, subdues them, and is too hard for them all, and therefore is himself the only *living and true God.* He is also higher than all princes and potentates, who also are called gods, and has both an uncontestable authority over them, and an irresistible power to control and over-rule them; he manages them all as he pleaseth, and gets honour upon them how great soever they are. 2. The confirmation and improvement of his faith. *Now know I;* he knew it before, but now he knew it better; his faith grew up to a full assurance, upon this fresh evidence. Those obstinately shut their eyes against the clearest light, who do not know that *the Lord is greater than all gods.* 3. The ground and reason upon which he built it; for wherein they dealt proudly, the magicians and the idols of Egypt they worshipped, or Pharaoh and his grandees, they both opposed God, and set up in competition with him, but *he was above them.* The magicians were baffled, the idols shaken, Pharaoh humbled, his powers broken, and in spite of all their confederacies, God's Israel was rescued out of their hands. Note, Sooner or later God will shew himself above those that by their proud dealing contest with him. He that *exalteth himself against God shall be abased.*

Lastly, The expressions of their joy and thankfulness; they had communion with each other both in a feast and in a sacrifice, *ver. 12.* Jethro being hearty in Israel's interests, was cheerfully admitted, though a Midianite into fellowship with Moses and the elders of Israel, *for as much as he also is a son of Abraham,* tho' of a younger house.

1. They joined in a sacrifice of thanksgiving. *Jethro took burnt-offerings for God,* and probably offered them himself, for he was a priest in Midian, and a worshipper of the true God, and the priesthood was not yet settled in Israel. Note, Mutual friendship is sanctified by joint-worship. It is a very good thing for relations and friends when they come together, to join together in the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, as those that meet in Christ the center of unity.

2. They joined in a feast of rejoicing, a feast upon the sacrifice. Moses upon this occasion invited his relations and friends to an entertainment in his own tent, a laudable usage among friends, and which Christ himself not only warranted, but recommended by his acceptance of such invitations. This was a temperate feast, they did eat bread, this bread we may suppose was manna, Jethro must see and taste that bread from heaven, and tho' a Gentile is as welcome to it as any Israelite; the Gentiles still are so to Christ the bread of life. It was a feast kept after a godly sort, they did eat bread before God, soberly, thankfully, in the fear of God, and their table-talk, such as became saints. Thus we must eat and drink to the glory of God, behaving our selves at our tables as those that believe God's eye upon us.

13 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses, from the morning unto the evening. 14. And when Moses father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? Why fittest thou thy self alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto evening? 15. And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to enquire of God. 16. When they have a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws. 17. And Moses father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. 18. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thy self alone. 19. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: 20. And thou shalt teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt shew them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. 21. Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 22. And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: So shall it be easier for thy self, and they shall bear the burden with thee. 23. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace. 24. So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had said. 25. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26. And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard causes they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves. 27. And Moses let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

Here is, 1. The great zeal and industry of Moses as a magistrate. Having been employed to redeem Israel out of the house of bondage, herein he is further a type of Christ, that he is employed as a lawgiver and a judge among them.

(1.) He was to answer enquiries, and acquaint them with the will of God in doubtful cases, and to explain the laws of God that were already given them, concerning the sabbath, the manna, &c. besides the laws of nature, relating both to piety and equity, *ver. 15.* *They came to enquire of God,* and happy it was for them that they had such an oracle to consult; we are ready to wish many a time we had some such certain way of knowing God's mind when we are at a loss what to do. Moses was faithful both to him that appointed him, and to them that consulted him, and made them know the statutes of God, and his laws, *ver. 16.* His business was not to make laws, but to make known God's laws; his place was but that of a servant.

(2.) He was to decide controversies, and determine matters in variance, judging *between a man and his fellow,* *ver. 16.* And if the people were as quarrelsome one with another as they were with God, no doubt he had a great many causes brought before him, and the more, because their trials put them to no expence, nor was the law costly to them. When a quarrel happened in Egypt, and Moses would have reconciled the contenders, they asked *who made thee a prince and a judge?* But now it was past dispute, that God had made him one; and they humbly attend him whom they had then proudly rejected.

This was the business Moses was called to, and it appears that he did it, (1.) With great consideration, which some think is intimated



timated in his posture, he *sate* to judge, *ver.* 13: composed and fedate. (2.) With great condescension to the people, who stood by him, *ver.* 14. He was very easy of access, the meanest Israelite was welcome himself to bring his cause before him. (3.) With great constancy and closeness of application. (1.) Though Jethro his father-in-law was with him, which might give him a good pretence for a vacation, he might have adjourned the court for that day, or at least have shortned it, yet he sits even the next day after his coming, from morning till evening. Note, Necessary business must always take place of civil respects. It is too great a complement to our friends, to prefer the enjoyment of their company before our duty to God, which ought to be done, and yet the other not left undone. (2.) Though Moses was advanced to great honour, yet he did not therefore take his ease, and throw upon others the burthen of care and business, no, he thought his preferment, instead of discharging him from service, obliged him to it. Those think of themselves above what is meet, that think it below them to do good. It is the honour even of angels themselves to be serviceable. (3.) Though the people had been provoking to him, and were ready to stone him, *chap.* xvii. 4. yet still he made himself the servant of all. Note, Though others fail in their duty to us, yet we must not therefore neglect ours to them. (4.) Though he was an old man, yet he stuck to his business from morning till night, and made it his meat and drink to do it. God had given him great strength both of body and mind, which enabled him to go through a great deal of work with ease, and pleasure, and for the encouragement of others to spend and be spent in the service of God, it proved that after all his labours, his natural force was not abated. They that wait on the Lord, and his service, shall renew their strength.

2. The great prudence and consideration of Jethro as a friend. 1. He disliked the method that Moses took, and was so free with him as to tell him so, *ver.* 14, 17, 18. He thought it was too much business for Moses to undertake himself alone, that it would be a prejudice to his own health, and too great a fatigue to him; it would likewise make the administration of justice tiresome to the people. And therefore he tells them plainly, it is not good. Note, There may be over-doing even in well-doing, and therefore our zeal must always be governed by discretion, that our good may not be evil spoken of. Wisdom is profitable to direct, that we may neither content our selves with less than our duty, nor overtask our selves with that which is beyond our strength. 2. He advised him to such a model of government as would better answer the intention, which was, (1.) That he should reserve to himself all applications to God, *ver.* 19. *Be thou for them to God-ward*, that was an honour which it was not fit any other should share with him in, *Num.* xii. 6, 7, 8. Also, whatever concerned the whole congregation in general must pass through his hand, *ver.* 20. But, (2.) That he should appoint judges in the several tribes and families, which should try causes between man and man, and determine them, which would be done with less noise, and more dispatch, than in the general assembly wherein Moses himself presided. Thus they must be governed as a nation by a king as supreme, and inferior magistrates sent and commissioned by him, *1 Pet.* ii. 13, 14. Thus many hands would make light work: causes would be sooner heard, and the people eased by having justice thus brought to their tent-doors. Yet, (3.) An appeal might lie, if there were just cause for it, from these inferior courts to Moses himself; at least if the judges were themselves at a loss, *ver.* 22. *every great matter they shall bring unto thee*. Thus that great man would be the more serviceable by being employed only in great matters. Note, Those whose gifts and stations are most eminent, may yet be greatly furthered in their work, by the assistance of those that are every way their inferiors, which therefore they should not despise. The head hath need of the hands and feet, *1 Cor.* xii. 21. Great men should not only study to be useful themselves, but contrive how to make others useful; according as their capacity is.

This is Jethro's advice, by which it appears, that though Moses excelled him in prophecy, he excelled Moses in politics. Yet he adds two qualifications to his counsel.

1. That great care should be taken in the choice of the persons who should be admitted into this trust, *ver.* 21. *they must be able men, &c.* It was requisite that they should be men of the best character. 1. For judgment and resolution, *able men*, men of good sense, that understood business, and bold men that would not be daunted by frowns or clamours. Clear heads and stout hearts make good judges. 2. For piety and religion, such as fear God, who believe there is a God above them whose eye is upon them, to whom they are accountable, and whose judgment they stand in awe of. Conscientious men, that dare not do an ill thing, though they could do it never so secretly and securely. The fear of God is that principle which will best fortify a man against all temptations to injustice, *Neh.* v. 15. *Gen.* xlii. 18. 3. For integrity and honesty, men of truth, whose word one may take, and whose fidelity one may rely upon; that would not for a world tell a lie, act a part, or betray a trust. 4. For a noble and generous contempt of worldly wealth, hating covetousness, not only not seeking bribes, or aiming to enrich themselves, but ab-

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horring the thought of it; he is fit to be a magistrate that *despise*th the gain of oppression, and *shaketh* his hands from the holding of bribes, *Isa.* xxxiii. 15.

2. That he should attend God's direction in the case, *ver.* 23 *if thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so*. Jethro knew that Moses had a better counsellor than he was, and to his counsel he refers him. Note, Advices must be given with a humble submission to the word and providence of God, which must always over-rule.

Now Moses did not despise this advice, because it came from one not acquainted as he was with the words of God, and the visions of the Almighty, but *hearkned to the voice of his father in law*, *ver.* 24. When he came to consider the thing, he saw the reasonableness of what his father-in-law offered, and resolved to put it in practice, which he did soon after, when he had received directions from God in that matter. Note, Those are not so wise as they would be thought to be, who think themselves too wise to be counselled, for a wise man, that is truly so, *will hear and will increase learning*, and not slight good counsel, though given by an inferior. Moses did not leave the election of the magistrates to the people, who had already done enough to prove themselves unfit for such a trust, but he chose them, and appointed them, some for greater, others for lesser divisions, the lesser probably subordinate to the greater. We have reason to value government as a very great mercy, and to thank God for laws and magistrates, that we are not like *the fishes of the sea, where the greater devour the lesser*. Lastly, Here is Jethro's return to his own land, *ver.* 27. No doubt, he took home with him the improvements he had made in the knowledge of God, and communicated them to his neighbours for their instruction. It is supposed that the Kenites mentioned, *1 Sam.* xv. 6. were the posterity of Jethro, (compare *Judg.* i. 16.) and they are there taken under special protection, for the kindness their ancestor here shewed to Israel. The good-will shewed to God's people, even in the smallest instances, shall in no wise lose its reward, but shall be recompensed at furthest in the resurrection.

## CHAP. XIX.

*This chapter introduceth the solemnity of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, which was one of the most sensible appearances of the Divine Glory that ever was in this lower world. Here is,* 1. *The Circumstances of time and place, ver.* 1, 2. 2. *The covenant between God and Israel settled in general. The gracious proposal God made to them, ver.* 3—6. *And their consent to the proposal, ver.* 7, 8. 3. *Notice given three days before of God's design to give the law out of a thick cloud, ver.* 9. *Orders given to prepare the people to receive the law, ver.* 10—13, *and care taken to execute those orders, ver.* 14—15. 4. *A terrible appearance of God's glory upon mount Sinai, ver.* 16—20. 5. *Silence proclaimed, and strict charge given to the people to observe a decorum while God spake to them, ver.* 20—25.

1. **I**N the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness, and there Israel camped before the mount. 3. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4. Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto my self. 5. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. 6. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. 7. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken, we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Here is, 1. The date of that great charter by which Israel was incorporated. (1.) The time when it bears date, *ver.* 1. in the third month after they came out of Egypt. It is computed that the law was given just fifty days after their coming out of Egypt, in remembrance of which the feast of pentecost was observed the fiftieth day after the passover, and in compliance with which, the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, at the feast of



of Pentecost, fifty days after the death of Christ. In Egypt they had spoken of three days journey into the wilderness to the place of their sacrificing, *chap. v. 3.* but it proved to be almost two months journey; so oft are we out in calculation of times; and things prove longer in the doing than we expected. (2.) The place whence it bears date, from mount Sinai, a place which nature, not art, had made eminent, and conspicuous, for it was the highest in all that range of mountains. Thus God put contempt upon cities and palaces, and magnificent structures, setting up his pavilion on the top of a high mountain in a waste and barren desert, there to carry on this treaty. It is called Sinai, from the multitude of thorny bushes that over-spread it.

2. The charter it self; Moses was called up to the mountain, on the top of which God had pitched his tent, and at the foot of which Israel had pitched theirs, and was employed as the mediator, or rather, no more but the messenger of the covenant, *ver. 3.* *Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel:* here the learned bishop Patrick notes, that the people are called by the names both of Jacob and Israel, to mind them that they who had lately been as low as Jacob, when he went to Padan-aram, were now grown as great as God made him, when he came from thence (justly enriched with the spoils of him that had oppressed him) and was called Israel.

Now observe, 1. That the maker, and first mover of the covenant is God himself. Nothing was said or done by this stupid unthinking people themselves towards this settlement; no motion made, no petition put up for God's favour, but this blessed charter was granted *ex mero motu*, purely out of God's on good-will. Note, In all our dealings with God, free grace prevents us with the blessings of goodness, and all our comfort is owing not to our knowing God, but rather to our being *known of him*, *Gal. iv. 9.* *we love him, visit him, and covenant with him, because he first loved us, visited us, and covenanted with us:* God is the Alpha, and therefore must be the Omega. 2. That the matter of the covenant is not only just and unexceptionable, and such as puts no hardship upon them, but kind and gracious, and such as gives them the greatest privileges and advantages imaginable.

1. He minds them of what he had done for them, *ver. 4.* He had righted them, and avenged them upon their persecutors and oppressors, *ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians*, how many lives were sacrificed to Israel's honour and interest, he had given them unparalleled instances of his favour to them, and his care of them, *I bare you on eagles wings*, a high expression of the wonderful tenderness God had shewed for them, it is explained, *Deut. xxxiii. 11, 12.* It notes great speed, God not only came upon the wing for their deliverance, when the set time was come, he rode on a cherub, and did fly, but he hastened them out, as it were upon the wing; also that he did it with great ease, with the strength as well as with the swiftness of an eagle. They that faint not, nor are weary, are said to *mount up with wings as eagles*, *Isai. xl. 31.* Especially, it notes God's particular care of them and affection to them. Even Egypt, that iron furnace, was the nest in which these young ones were hatched, where they were first formed as the embryo of a nation; when by the increase of their numbers they grew to some maturity, they were carried out of that nest. Other birds carry their young in their talons, but the eagle (they say) upon her wings, so that even those artists which shoot flying cannot hurt the young ones, but they must first shoot through the old one. Thus in the Red sea, the pillar of cloud and fire, the token of God's presence, interposed it self between the Israelites and their pursuers, lines of defence which could not be forced, a wall which could not be penetrated, yet this was not all; their way so paved, so guarded, was glorious, but their end much more so, I brought you unto my self. They were brought not only into a state of liberty, and honour, but into covenant and communion with God. This, this was the glory of their deliverance, as it is of ours by Christ, that he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. This God aims at in all the gracious methods of his providence and grace, to bring us back to himself, from whom we have revolted, and to bring us home to himself, in whom alone we can be happy. He appeals to themselves, and their own observation and experience, for the truth of what is here insisted on; ye have seen what I did, so that they could not disbelieve God, unless they would first disbelieve their own eyes. They saw how all that was done was purely the Lord's doing. It was not they that reached towards God, but it was he that brought them to himself. Some have well observed, that the Old Testament church is said to be born upon eagles wings, noting the power of that dispensation, which was carried on with *a high hand and an out-stretched arm*; but the New Testament church is said to be gathered by the Lord Jesus, *as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings*, *Matth. xxiii. 37.* noting the grace and compassion of that dispensation, and the admirable condescension and humiliation of the redeemer.

2. He tells them plainly what he expected and required from them, in one word, *obedience*, *ver. 5.* that they should *obey his voice indeed, and keep his covenant*. Being thus saved by him, that which he insisted upon was that they should be ruled by him. The reasonableness of this demand is long after pleaded with them, that *in the day he brought them out of the land of Egypt*, this was the condition of the covenant, *obey my voice*, *Jer. vii. 23.* and this he is said to protest earnestly to them, *Jer. xi. 4, 7.* Only obey indeed, not in profession and promise only, not in pretence but in sincerity. God had shewed them real favours, and therefore required real obedience.

3. He assures them of the honour he would put upon them, and the kindness he would shew them, in case they did thus keep his covenant, *ver. 5, 6.* *then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me.* He doth not instance in any one particular favour, as giving them the land of Canaan, or the like, but expresseth it in that which was inclusive of all happiness, that he would be to them a God in covenant, and they should be to him a people. (1.) God here asserts his sovereignty over, and propriety in, the whole visible creation. All the earth is mine. Therefore he needed them not; he that had so vast a dominion was great enough, and happy enough, without concerning himself for so small a demesne as Israel was. All nations on the earth being his, he might chuse which he pleased for his peculiar, and act in a way of sovereignty. (2.) He appropriates Israel to himself. 1. As a people dear unto him, you shall be a peculiar treasure; not that God was enriched by them, as a man is by his treasure, but he was pleased to value and esteem them as a man doth his treasure, they were *precious in his sight and honourable*, *Isa. xliii. 4.* he *set his love upon them*, *Deut. vii. 7.* took them under his special care and protection, as a treasure that is kept under lock and key. He looked upon the rest of the world but as trash and lumber in comparison with them. By giving them divine revelation, instituted ordinances, promises inclusive of eternal life, sending his prophets among them, and pouring out his Spirit upon them, he distinguished them from, and dignified them above, all people. And this honour have all the saints, they are unto God a *peculiar people*, *Tit. ii. 14.* his when he *makes up his jewels*. 2. As a people devoted to him, and to his honour and service. *ver. 6.* a *kingdom of priests, a holy nation*. All the Israelites, if compared with other people, were priests unto God, so near were they to him, *Psal. cxlviii. 14.* so much employed in his immediate service, and such intimate communion they had with him. When they were first made a free people, it was that they might *sacrifice to the Lord their God, as priests*; they were under God's immediate government, and the tendency of the laws given them was to distinguish them from others, and engage them for God as a holy nation. Thus all believers are through Christ made to our God kings and priests, *Rev. i. 6.* a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood*, *1 Pet. ii. 9.*

3. Israel's acceptance of this charter, and consent to the conditions of it. (1.) Moses faithfully delivered God's message to them, *ver. 7.* he *laid before their faces all those words*, he not only explained to them what God hath given him in charge, but he put it to their choice, whether they would accept these promises upon these terms or no. His laying it to their faces, speaks his laying it to their consciences. (2.) They readily agreed to the covenant proposed. They would oblige themselves to obey the voice of God, and take it as a great favour to be made a kingdom of priests to him. They answered together as one man, *ne-mine contradicente*, *ver. 8.* *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* Thus they strike the bargain, accepting the Lord to be to them a God, and giving up themselves to be to him a people. O that there had been such a heart in them! (3.) Moses, as a mediator, returned the words of the people to God, *ver. 8.* Thus Christ, the mediator between us and God, as a prophet, reveals God's will to us, his precepts and promises, and then, as a priest, offers up to God our spiritual sacrifices, not only of prayer and praise, but of devout affections, and pious resolutions, the work of his own Spirit in us. Thus he is that blessed *days-man who lays his hand upon us both*.

9. And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD. 10. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctifie them to day, and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11. And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. 12. And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to your selves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount, shall be surely put to death. 13. There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or



or shot through; whether it be beast, or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet foundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. 14. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people, and they washed their cloaths. 15. And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

Here, 1. God signifies to Moses his purpose of coming down upon mount Sinai, in some visible appearance of his glory in a thick cloud, ver. 9. for he said he would dwell in the thick darkness, 2 Chron. vi. 1. and make that his pavilion, Psal. xviii. 11. holding back the face of his throne, then when he set it upon mount Sinai, and spreading a cloud upon it, Job xxvi. 9. This thick cloud was to prohibit curious enquiries into things secret, and to command an awful adoration of that of God which was revealed. He would come down in the sight of all the people, ver. 11. though they should see no manner of similitude; yet they should see so much as would convince them, that God was among them of a truth. And so high was the top of mount Sinai, that it is supposed not only the camp of Israel, but even the countries about might discern some extraordinary appearance of glory upon it, which would strike a terror upon them. But that which seems to have been much designed in it, was to put an honour upon Moses, ver. 9. that they may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. Thus the correspondence was to be first settled by a sensible appearance of the divine glory, which was afterwards to be carried on more silently by the ministry of Moses. In like manner, the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon Christ at his baptism, and all that were present heard God speak to him, Mat. iii. 17. that afterwards without the repetition of such visible tokens they might believe him. So likewise the Spirit descended in cloven tongues upon the apostles, Acts ii. 1. that they might be believed. Observe, when the people had declared themselves willing to obey the voice of God, then God promised they should hear his voice, for if any man be resolved to do his will, he shall know it. Joh. vii. 17.

2. He ordered Moses to make preparation for this great solemnity, giving him two days time for it.

1. He must sanctify the people, ver. 10. as Job before this sent and sanctified his sons, Job i. 5. He must raise their expectation by giving them notice what God would do, and assist their preparation by directing them what they must do. Sanctify them, i. e. call them off from their worldly business, and call them to religious exercises, meditation and prayer, that they may receive the law from God's mouth with reverence and devotion. Let them be ready, ver. 11. Note, When we are to attend upon God in solemn ordinances, it concerns us to sanctify our selves and to get ready beforehand. Wandring thoughts must be gathered in, impure affections abandoned, disquieting passions suppressed, nay, and all cares about secular business for the present dismissed and laid by, that our hearts may be engaged to approach unto God. Two things particularly were prescribed as signs and instances of their preparation. (1.) In token of their cleansing of themselves from all sinful pollutions that they might be holy to God, they must wash their cloaths, ver. 10. and they did so, ver. 14. not that God regards our cloaths, but while they were washing their cloaths, he would have them think of washing their souls by repentance, from the sins they had contracted in Egypt, and since their deliverance. It becomes us to appear in clean cloaths when we wait upon great men; so clean hearts are required in our attendance on the great God, who sees them as plainly as men see our cloaths. This is absolutely necessary to our acceptable worshipping of God. See Psal. xxvi. 6. Isa. i. 16, 18. Heb. x. 22. (2.) In token of their devoting themselves intirely to religious exercises, upon this occasion they must abstain even from lawful enjoyments during these three days, and not come at their wives, ver. 15. See 1 Cor. vii. 5.

2. He must set bounds about the mountain, ver. 12, 13. Probably, he drew a line or ditch round at the foot of the hill, which none were to pass upon pain of death. This was to intimate, 1. That humble awful reverence which ought to possess the minds of all those that worship God. We are mean creatures before a great Creator, vile sinners before a holy righteous Judge, and therefore a godly fear and shame will become us, Heb. xii. 28. Psal. ii. 11. 2. The distance which worshippers were kept at under that dispensation, which we ought to take notice of, that we may the more value our privilege under the gospel, having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19.

3. He must order the people to attend, upon the summons that should be given, ver. 13. When the trumpet foundeth long, then let them take their places at the foot of the mount, and so sit down at God's feet, as it is explained, Deut. xxxiii. 3. Never was so great a congregation called together and preached to at once as this was here. No one man's voice could have reached so many, but the voice of God did.

16. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp, trembled. 17. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount. 18. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. 19. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount, and Moses went up. 21. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22. And let the priests also which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. 23. And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24. And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25. So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Now at length is come that memorable day, that terrible day of the Lord, that little day of judgment, in which Israel heard the voice of the Lord God speaking to them out of the midst of the fire and lived, Deut. iv. 33. Never was there such a sermon preached before or since, as this which was here preached to the church in the wilderness. For,

1. The preacher was God himself, ver. 18. The Lord descended in fire, and ver. 20. The Lord came down upon mount Sinai. The Shechinah, or glory of the Lord, appeared in the sight of all the people, he shined forth from mount Paran with ten thousands of his saints, Deut. xxxiii. 2. i. e. attended as the Divine Majesty always is, with a multitude of the holy angels, who were both to grace the solemnity, and to assist it. Hence the law is said to be given by the disposition of angels, Acts vii. 53.

2. The pulpit (or throne rather) was mount Sinai, hung with a thick cloud, ver. 16. covered with a smoke, ver. 18. and made to quake greatly. Now it was that the earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, and the mountains skipped like rams, Psal. cxiv. 4, 7. that Sinai itself, the rough and rocky, melted from before the Lord God of Israel, Judg. v. 5. Now it was that the mountains saw him and trembled, (Hab. iii. 10.) and were witnesses against a hard-hearted unmoved people, whom nothing would influence.

3. The congregation was called together by the sound of a trumpet, exceeding loud, ver. 16. and waxing louder and louder, ver. 19. This was done by the ministry of the angels, and we read of trumpets sounded by angels, Rev. vii. 6. It was the sound of the trumpet that made all the people tremble, as those that knew their own guilt, and that they had reason to expect that the sound of this trumpet should have been to them the alarm of war.

4. Moses brought the hearers to the place of meeting, ver. 17. He that had led them out of the bondage of Egypt, now led them to receive the law from God's mouth. Public persons are then public blessings, when they lay out themselves in their places to promote the public worship of God. Moses at the head of an assembly worshipping God, was as truly great, as Moses at the head of an army in the field.

5. The introductions to the service were thunders and lightnings, ver. 16. These were designed to strike an awe upon the people, and to raise and engage their attention. Were they asleep, the thunders would waken them: were they looking another way, the lightnings would engage them to turn their faces towards him that spake to them. Thunder and lightning have natural causes, but the scripture directs us in a particular manner to take notice of the power of God, and his terror in them. Thunder is the voice of God, and lightning the fire of God, proper to engage both the learning senses of seeing and hearing.

6. Moses is God's minister, who is spoken to, to command silence, and keep the congregation in order, ver. 19. Moses spake. Some think now it was that he said, I exceedingly fear and



and quake, Heb. xii. 21. but God stilled his fear by his distinguishing favour to him, in calling him up to the top of the mount, ver. 20. by which also he tried his faith and courage. No sooner was Moses got up a little way towards the top of the mount, but he was sent down again to keep the people from breaking through to gaze, ver. 21. Even the priests or princes, the heads of the houses of their fathers, who officiated for their respective families, and therefore are said to come near to the Lord at other times, yet must now keep their distance, and carry themselves with a great deal of caution. Moses pleads that they needed not to have any further orders given them, effectual care was taken already to prevent any intrusions, ver. 23. But God who knew their wilfulness and presumption, and what was now in the hearts of some of them, hastens him down with this in charge, that neither the priests nor the people should offer to force the lines that were set, to come up unto the Lord, but Moses and Aaron only, the men whom God delighted to honour. Observe, 1. What it was that God forbade them, breaking through to gaze; enough was provided to awaken their consciences, but they were not allowed to gratify their vain curiosity. They might see, but not gaze. Some of them probably were desirous to see some similitude, that they might know how to make an image of God, which he took care to prevent, for they saw no manner of similitude, Deut. iv. 15. Note, In divine things we must not covet to know more than God would have us know, and he has allowed us as much as is good for us. A desire of forbidden knowledge was the ruin of our first parents. Those that would be wiser above what is written, and intrude into those things which they have not seen, need this admonition, that they break not through to gaze. 2. Under what penalty it was forbidden, lest the Lord break forth upon them, ver. 22, 24. and many of them perish. Note, 1. The restraints and warnings of the divine law are all intended for our own good, and to keep us out of that danger which otherwise we should, by our own folly, run our selves into. 2. It is at our peril, if we break the bounds that God hath set us, and intrude upon that which he has not allowed us; the Bethshemites and Uzza paid dear for their presumption. And even when we are called to approach unto God, we must remember that he is in heaven, and we upon earth, and therefore it behoves us to observe a decorum.

## C H A P. XX.

All things being prepared for the solemn promulgation of the divine law, we have in this chapter, 1. The ten commandments as God himself spake them upon mount Sinai, ver. 1—17. as remarkable a portion in scripture as any in the Old Testament. 2. The impressions made upon the people thereby, ver. 18—21. 3. Some particular instructions, which God gave privately to Moses, to be by him communicated to the people, relating to his worship, ver. 22—26.

1. **A**ND God spake all these words, saying, 2. I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5. Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: 6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8. Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy. 9. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. 10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. 11. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

Here is, 1. The preface of the law-writer, Moses, ver. 1. God spake all these words. The law of the ten commandments is, (1.) A law of God's making. They are enjoined by the infinite eter-

nal Majesty of heaven and earth. And where the word of the King of kings is, sure there is power. (2.) It is a law of his own speaking. God has many ways of speaking to the children of men, Job xxxiii. 14. once, yea twice, by his Spirit, conscience, providences, his voice, all which we ought carefully to attend to, but he never spake at any time upon any occasion, so as he spake the ten commandments; which therefore we ought to hear with the more earnest heed. It was not only spoken audibly, so he owned the redeemer by a voice from heaven, Matth. iii. 17. but with a great deal of dreadful pomp. This law God had given to man before, it was written in his heart by nature, but sin had so defaced that writing, that it was necessary in this manner to revive the knowledge of it.

2. The preface of the law-maker, ver. 2. I am the Lord thy God. Herein, (1.) God asserts his own authority to enact this law in general, I am the Lord who command thee all that follows. (2.) He proposeth himself as the sole object of that religious worship, which is enjoined in the four first of the commandments. They are here bound to obedience by a threefold cord, which one would think should not easily be broken. (1.) Because God is the Lord. Jehovah, self-existent, independent, eternal, and the fountain of all being and power: Therefore he has an uncontested right to command us. He that gives being, may give law, and therefore he is able to bear us out in our obedience, to reward it, and to punish our disobedience. (2.) He was their God, a God in covenant with them, their God by their own consent, and if they would not keep his commandments, who would? He had laid himself under obligations to them by promise, and therefore might justly lay his obligations on them by precept. Tho' that covenant of peculiarity is now no more, yet there is another, by virtue of which all that are baptized, are taken into relation to him as their God, and are therefore unjust, unfaithful, and very unkind, if they obey him not. (3.) He had brought them out of the land of Egypt. Therefore they were bound in gratitude to obey him, because he had done them so great a kindness, had brought them out of a grievous slavery into a glorious liberty; they themselves had been eye-witnesses of the great things God had done, in order to their deliverance; and could not but have observed that every circumstance of it made it yet more obliging; they were now enjoying the blessed fruits of their deliverance, and in expectation of a speedy settlement in Canaan, and could they think any thing too much to do for him that had done so much for them. Nay, by redeeming them he acquired a further right to rule them, they owed their service to him to whom they owed their freedom, and whose they were by purchase. And thus, Christ having rescued us out of the bondage of sin, is intitled to the best service we can do him, Luke i. 74. Having loosed our bonds, he has bound us to obey him, Psal. cxvi. 16.

3. The law itself. The four first of the ten commandments, which concern our duty to God (commonly called the first table) we have in these verses. It was fit those should be put first, because man had a maker to love, before he had a neighbour to love, and justice and charity are then only acceptable acts of obedience to God, when they flow from the principles of piety. It cannot be expected he should be true to his brother, that is false to his God.

Now our duty to God is in one word to worship him, i. e. to give unto him the glory due unto his name, the inward worship of our affections, the outward worship of solemn address and attendance. This is spoken of as the sum and substance of the everlasting gospel, Rev. xiv. 7. worship God.

1. The first commandment is concerning the object of our worship, Jehovah, and him only, ver. 3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. The Egyptians and other neighbour nations had many gods, the creatures of their own fancy, strange gods, new gods; this law was prefixed, because of that transgression, and Jehovah being the God of Israel, they must intirely cleave to him, and not be for any other, either of their own invention, or borrowed from their neighbours. This was the sin they were most in danger of, now the world was so universally over-spread with Polytheism, which yet could not be rooted out effectually but by the gospel of Christ. The sin against this commandment which we are most in danger of, is giving that glory and honour to any creature, which is due to God only. Pride makes a god of self, covetousness makes a god of money, sensuality makes a god of the belly; whatever is esteemed and loved, feared or served, delighted in, or depended on more than God, that (whatever it is) we do in effect make a god of. This prohibition includes a precept which is the foundation of the whole law, that we take the Lord for our God, acknowledge that he is God, accept him for ours, adore him with admiration and humble reverence, and set our affections intirely upon him. There is a reason intimated in the last words before me; it intimates, (1.) That we cannot have any other God but he will certainly know it. There is none beside him, but what is before him. Idolaters coveted secrecy, but shall not God search this out! (2.) That it is very provoking to him, it is a sin that dares him to his face, which he cannot, which he will not, over-look, or connive at. See Psal. xlv. 20, 21.



2. The second commandment is concerning the ordinances of worship, or the way in which God will be worshipped, which it is fit he himself should have the appointing of. Here is,

1. The prohibition, we are here forbidden to worship even the true God by images, *ver. 4, 5.* (1.) The Jews (at least after the captivity) thought themselves forbidden by this commandment to *make any image* or picture whatsoever. Hence the very images which the Roman armies had in their ensigns, are called an abomination to them, (*Matth. xxiv. 15.*) especially when they were set up *in the holy place*. It is certain it forbids making any image of God, for *to whom can we liken him?* Isa. xl. 18, 25. or the image of any creature for a religious use, it is called the *changing of the truth of God into a lie*, Rom. i. 21. for an image is *a teacher of lies*, it insinuates to us that God hath a body, whereas he is an infinite Spirit, *Hab. ii. 18.* It also forbids us to make images of God in our fancies, as if he were *a man as we are*. Our religious worship must be governed by the power of faith, not by the power of imagination. They must not make such images or pictures as the heathen worshipped, lest they also should be tempted to worship them. Those who would be kept from sin, must keep themselves from the occasions of it. (2.) They must not *bow down to them* occasionally, *i. e.* shew any sign of respect or honour to them, much less serve them constantly, by sacrifice or incense, or any other act of religious worship. When they paid their devotion to the true God, they must not have any image before them for the directing, exciting, or assisting of their devotion. Though the worship was designed to terminate in God, it would not please him if it came to him through an image. The best and most ancient lawgivers among the heathen, forbade the setting up of images in their temples; it was forbidden in Rome by Numa, a pagan prince, yet commanded in Rome by the pope, a christian bishop, but in this anti-christian. The use of images in the church of Rome at this day, is so plainly contrary to the letter of this command, and so impossible to be reconciled to it, that in all their catechisms and books of devotion which they put into the hands of the people, they leave out this commandment, joyning the reason of it to the first, and so the third commandment they call the second, the fourth the third, &c. only to make up the number ten, they divide the tenth into two. Thus have they committed two great evils, persist in them, and hate to be reformed, they take away from God's word, and add to his worship.

2. The Reasons to enforce this prohibition, *ver. 5, 6.* which are, 1. God's jealousy in the matters of his worship. I the Lord Jehovah, and thy God, am a jealous God, especially in things of this nature. It intimates the care he has of his own institutions, his hatred of idolatry, and all false worship, his displeasure against idolaters, and that he resents every thing in his worship that looks like, or leads to, idolatry. Jealousy is quick-sighted. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, as it is very often represented in scripture, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy. If God be jealous herein, we should be so, afraid of offering any worship to God otherwise than as he has appointed in his word. 2. The punishment of idolaters. God looks upon them as haters of him, though they perhaps pretend love to him, he will visit their iniquity, *i. e.* he will very severely punish it, not only as a breach of his law, but as an affront to his majesty, a violation of the covenant, and a blow at the root of all religion. He will *visit it upon the children*, *i. e.* This being a sin for which churches shall be unchurched, and a bill of divorce given them, with the parents the children also shall be cast out of covenant and communion, as with the parents the children were at first taken in. Or, he will bring such judgments upon a people, as shall be the total ruin of families. If idolaters live to be old, so as to see their children of the third or fourth generation, it shall be the vexation of their eyes, and the breaking of their hearts to see them fall by the sword, carried captives, and enslaved. Nor is it an unrighteous thing with God if the parents died in their iniquity, and the children tread in their steps, and keep up false worships, because they received them by tradition from their fathers, when the measure is full, and God comes by his judgments to reckon with them, to bring into the account the idolatries their fathers were guilty of. Though he bear long with an idolatrous people, he will not bear always, but by the fourth generation at furthest he will begin to visit. Children are dear to their parents, therefore to deter men from idolatry, and to shew how much God is displeased with it, not only a brand of infamy is by it entailed upon families, but the judgments of God may for it be executed upon the poor children when the parents are dead and gone. 3. The favour God would shew to his faithful worshippers, *Keeping mercy for thousands of persons, thousands of generations of them that love me, and keep my commandments.* This intimates that the second commandment, though in the letter of it, it is only a prohibition of false worships, yet it includes a precept of worshipping God in all those ordinances which he hath instituted. As the first commandment requires the inward worship of love, desire, joy, hope,

and admiration; so this the outward worship of prayer and praise, and solemn attendance on his word. Note, 1. Those that truly love God, will make it their constant care and endeavour to keep his commandments, particularly those that relate to his worship. Those that love God, and keep those commandments, shall receive grace to keep his other commandments. Gospel worship will have a good influence upon all manner of gospel obedience. 2. God has mercy in store for such, even they need mercy, and cannot plead merit; and mercy they shall find with God; merciful protection in their obedience, and a merciful recompence of it. 3. This mercy shall extend to thousands, much further than the wrath threatened to those that hate him, for that reaches but to the third or fourth generation. The streams of mercy run now as full, as free, and as fresh as ever.

3. The third commandment is concerning the manner of our worship, that it be done with all possible reverence and seriousness, *ver. 7.* Where we have,

1. A strict prohibition. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.* Supposing that having taken Jehovah for their God, they would make mention of his name, (for thus *all people will walk every one in the name of his God*) this command gives a needful caution not to mention it in vain, and it is still as needful as ever. We take God's name in vain, (1.) By hypocrisy, making a profession of God's name, and a value for it, but not living up to that profession. They that name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity, as that name binds them to do, name it in *vain*, their worship is *vain*, *Matth. xv. 7, 8.* their oblations *vain*, *Isa. i. 11, 13.* their religion *vain*, *Jam. i. 26.* (2.) By covenant breaking; if we make promises to God, binding our souls with those bonds to that which is good, and yet perform not to the Lord our vows, we take his name in vain, *Matth. v. 33.* it is folly, and *God has no pleasure in fools*, *Eccl. v. 4.* nor will he be *mocked*, *Gal. vi. 7.* (3.) By rash swearing, mentioning the name of God, or any of his attributes, in the form of an oath, without any just occasion for it, or due application of mind to it, but as a by-word, to no purpose at all, or to no good purpose. (4.) By false swearing, which some think is chiefly intended in the letter of the commandment, so it was expounded by them of old time, *Thou shalt not forswear thyself*, *Matth. v. 33.* One part of the religious regard the Jews were taught to pay to their God was, to *swear by his name*, *Deut. x. 20.* But they affronted him, instead of doing him honour, if they called him to be witness to a lie. (5.) By using the name of God lightly and carelessly, and without any regard to its awful significancy. The profanation of their forms of devotion is forbidden, as well as the profanation of the forms of swearing; as also the profanation of any of those things whereby God makes himself known, his word, or any of his institutions, when they are either turned into charms and spells, or into jest and sport, the name of God is taken in vain.

2. A severe penalty, *the Lord will not hold him guiltless*; magistrates that punish other offences, may not think themselves concerned to take notice of this, because it doth not immediately offer injury either to private property, or the publick peace, but God, who is jealous for his honour, will not thus connive at it. The sinner may perhaps hold himself guiltless, and think there is no harm in it, nor that God will ever call him to an account for it; to obviate which suggestion, the threatening is thus expressed, *God will not hold him guiltless*, as he hopes he will, but more is implied, that God will himself be the avenger of those that take his name in vain, and they will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

4. The fourth commandment concerns the time of worship; God is to be served and honoured daily, but *one day in seven* is to be particularly dedicated to his honour, and spent in his service.

Here is, 1. The command it self, *ver. 8. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy*, and *ver. 10. in it thou shalt do no manner of work.* It is taken for granted that the sabbath was instituted before; we read of God's blessing and sanctifying a seventh day from the beginning, *Gen. ii. 3.* so that this was not the enacting of a new law, but the reviving of an old law. 1. They are told what is the day they must religiously observe, *a seventh, after six days labour*, whether this was the seventh by computation from the first seventh, or from the day of their coming out of Egypt, or both, is not certain: now the precise day was notified to them, *chap. xvi. 23.* and from this they were to observe the seventh. 2. How it must be observed. (1.) As a day of rest, they were to do no manner of work on this day, in their callings or worldly business. (2.) As a holy day, set apart to the honour of the holy God, and to be spent in holy exercises. God by his blessing it, had made it holy, they, by solemn blessing him, must keep it holy, and not alienate it to any other purpose than that for which the difference between it and other days was instituted. 3. Who must observe it, *thou and thy son, and thy daughter*: the wife is not mentioned, because she is supposed to be one with the husband, and present with him, and if he sanctify the sabbath it is taken for granted she will join with him: but the rest of the family is instanced in, children and servants must keep the sabbath



bath, according to their age and capacity : in this, as in other instances of religion, it is expected that masters of families should take care not only to serve the Lord themselves, but that their houses also should serve him, at least that it may not be through their neglect, if they do not, *Josh. xxiv. 15.* Even the profelyted strangers must observe a difference between this day and other days, which if it laid some restraint upon them then, yet proved a happy indication of God's gracious design in process of time to bring the Gentiles in to the church, that they might share in the benefit of sabbaths. Compare *Isa. lvi. 6; 7.* God takes notice what we do, particularly what we do on sabbath days, though we be where we are strangers. 4. A particular memorandum put upon this duty, *remember it.* It is intimated that the sabbath was instituted and observed before; but in their bondage in Egypt they had either lost their computation; or were restrained by their task-masters, or through a great degeneracy and indifferency in religion, they had let fall the observance of it, and therefore it was requisite they should be minded of it. Note, Neglected duties remain duties still notwithstanding our neglect: It also intimates that we are both apt to forget it, and concerned to remember it: some think it notes the preparation we are to make for the sabbath; we must think of it before it comes, that when it doth come we may keep it holy, and do the duty of it.

2. The reasons of this command, 1. We have time enough for ourselves on the other six days; *six days must thou labour:* time enough we have to serve ourselves in those six days, on the seventh day let us serve God; and time enough to tire ourselves, on the seventh it will be a kindness to us to be obliged to rest. 2. This is God's day, it is the *sabbath of the Lord thy God*, not only instituted by him, but consecrated to him, it is sacrilege to alienate it, it is due debt to sanctify it. 3. It is designed for a memorial of the creation of the world, and therefore to be observed to the glory of the Creator; as an engagement upon ourselves to serve him, and an encouragement to us to trust in him who made heaven and earth. By the sanctification of the sabbath the Jews declared that they worshipped the God that made the world, and so distinguished themselves from all other nations who worshipped gods which they themselves made. 4. God has given us an example of rest after six days work; he *rested the seventh day*, took a complacency in himself and *rejoiced in the work of his hand*, to teach us on that day to take a complacency in him, and to give him the glory of his works, *Psal. xcii. 4.* The sabbath begun in the finishing of the work of creation, so will the everlasting sabbath in the finishing of the work of providence and redemption; and we observe the weekly sabbath in expectation of that, as well as in remembrance of the former; in both conforming ourselves to him we worship. 5. He hath himself *blessed the sabbath day and sanctified it*: he hath put an honour upon it, by setting it apart for himself, it is holy of the Lord and honourable; and he hath put blessings into it, which he hath encouraged us to expect from him in the religious observation of that day; it is *the day which the Lord has made*, let not us do what we can to unmake it; he hath blessed, honoured and sanctified it, let not us profane it, dishonour it, and level that with common time which God's blessing has thus dignified and distinguished.

12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. 13. Thou shalt not kill. 14. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15. Thou shalt not steal. 16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbours house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbours wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbours.

We have here the laws of the second table, as they are commonly called, the six last of the ten commandments which concern our duty to ourselves, and one to another, and are a comment upon the second great commandment, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* As religion towards God is an essential branch of universal righteousness, so righteousness towards men is an essential branch of true religion: Godliness and honesty must go together.

1. The fifth commandment is concerning the duties we owe to our relations; that of children to their parents is only instanced in, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, which includes, (1.) A decent respect to their persons, an inward esteem of them outwardly expressed upon all occasions in our carriage towards them, fear them, *Lev. xix. 3. give them reverence*, Heb. xii. 9. The contrary to this is mocking at them and despising them, *Prov. xxx. 17.* (2.) Obedience to their lawful commands; so it is expounded; *Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3. Children, obey your parents*, come when they call you, go where they send you, do what they bid you, do not what they forbid you, and this, as children, cheerfully, and from a principle of love. Though you have said you will not, yet afterwards repent and obey, *Matth. xxi. 31.* (3.) Submission to their re-

bukes, instructions, and corrections, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; out of conscience towards God. (4.) Disposing of themselves with the advice, direction, and consent of parents, not alienating their property, but with their approbation. (5.) Endeavouring in every thing to be the comfort of their parents, and to make their old age easy to them; maintaining them if they stand in need of support, which our Saviour makes to be particularly intended in this commandment, *Matth. xv. 4, 5, 6.*

The reason annexed to this commandment is a promise, that *thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*: having mentioned in the preface to the commandments his bringing them out of Egypt as a reason for their obedience, he here in the beginning of the second table mentions his bringing them into Canaan as another reason; that good land they must have upon their thoughts, and in their eye, now they were in the wilderness. They must also remember when they were come to that land; that they were upon their good behaviour, and if they did not carry themselves well, their day should be shortened in that land; both the days of particular persons that should be cut off from it, and the days of their nation that should be removed out of it. But here a long life in that good land is promised particularly to obedient children. They that do their duty to their parents are most likely to have the comfort of that which their parents gather for them; and leave to them: they that support their parents, God, the common Father, will support them. This promise is expounded, *Eph. vi. 3. That it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live long on the earth.* Those that in conscience towards God keep this and other of God's commandments, may be sure it shall be well with them, and they shall live as long on earth as infinite wisdom sees good for them; and what they may seem to be cut short of on earth, shall be abundantly made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan which God will give them.

2. The sixth commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's life, ver. 13. *Thou shalt not kill*: Thou shalt not do any thing hurtful or injurious to the health, ease, and life, of thy own body, or any others, unjustly. This is one of the laws of nature, and was strongly enforced by the precepts given to Noah and his sons, *Gen. ix. 5, 6.* It doth not forbid killing in lawful war, or in our own necessary defence, or the magistrates putting offenders to death, for those are really in order to the preserving of life; but it forbids all malice and hatred to the person of any, for *he that hateth his brother is a murderer*, and all personal revenge arising therefrom: also all rash anger upon sudden provocations, and hurt said or done, or aimed to be done in passion; of this our Saviour expounds this commandment, *Matth. v. 22.* And as that which is worst of all, it forbids persecution, laying wait for the blood of the innocent, and excellent ones of the earth.

3. The seventh commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's chastity, ver. 14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery*: this is put before the sixth by our Saviour, *Mar. x. 19. Do not commit adultery, do not kill*, for our chastity should be as dear to us as our lives, and we should be as much afraid of that which defiles the body, as of that which destroys it. This commandment forbids all acts of uncleanness, with all those fleshly lusts which produce those acts and war against the soul, and all those practices which cherish and excite those fleshly lusts, as looking to lust; which Christ tells us is forbidden in this commandment; *Matth. v. 28.*

4. The eighth commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's wealth, estate, and goods, ver. 15. *Thou shalt not steal*: Though God had lately allowed and appointed them to spoil the Egyptians, in a way of just reprisal, yet he did not intend it should be drawn into a precedent, and that they should be allowed thus to spoil one another. This command forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have, by sinful spending, or of the use and comfort of it by sinful sparing; and to rob others by removing the ancient land-marks, invading our neighbour's rights, taking his goods from his person, or house, or field, forcibly or clandestinely, over-reaching in bargains, not restoring what is borrowed or found, with-holding just debts, rents, or wages; and, which is worst of all, to rob the public in the coin or revenue, or that which is dedicated to the service of religion.

5. The ninth commandment concerns our own and our neighbour's good name, ver. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness*: this forbids, 1. Speaking falsely in any matter, lying, equivocating, and any way devising and designing to deceive our neighbour. 2. Speaking unjustly against our neighbour to the prejudice of his reputation, and, 3. (which is the highest offence of both these kinds put together) bearing false witness against him, laying to his charge things that he knows not either judicially upon oath, by which the third commandment, and the sixth or eighth, as well as this; are broken, or extrajudicially in common converse, slandering, back-biting, tale-bearing, aggravating what is done amiss, and making it worse than it is; and any way endeavouring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbour's.

6. The tenth commandment strikes at the root, ver. 17. *Thou shalt not covet*: the foregoing commands implicitly forbid all desire of



of doing that which will be an injury to our neighbour, this forbids all inordinate desire of having that which will be a gratification to ourselves. O that such a man's house were mine! Such a man's wife mine! Such a man's estate mine! This is certainly the language of discontent at our own lot, and envy at our neighbour's, and these are the sins principally forbidden here. St Paul, when the grace of God caused the scales to fall from his eyes, perceived that this law *thou shalt not covet*, forbids all those irregular appetites and desires which are the first born of the corrupt nature, the first risings of the sin that dwelleth in us, and the first beginnings of all the sin that is committed by us: this is that lust which, he saith, he had not known the evil of, if this commandment when it came to his conscience in the power of it, had not shewed it him, *Rom. vii. 7*. God give us all to see our face in the glass of this law, and to lay our hearts under the government of it.

18. And all the people saw the thundrings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. 19. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. 20. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. 21. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Observe, 1. The extraordinary terror with which the law was given; never was any thing delivered with such an awful pomp; every word was accented, and every sentence paused, with thunder and lightning, much louder and brighter, no doubt, than ordinary. And why was the law given in this dreadful manner, and with all this tremendous ceremony? (1.) It was designed (once for all) to give a sensible discovery of the glorious majesty of God, for the assistance of our faith concerning it, that *knowing the terror of the Lord* we may be persuaded to live in his fear. (2.) It was a specimen of the terrors of the general judgment, in which sinners will be called to an account for the breach of this law: the arch-angel's trumpet will then sound an alarm, to give notice of the judge's coming, and a *fire shall devour before him*. (3.) It was an indication of the terror of those convictions which the law gives to conscience, to prepare the soul for the comforts of the gospel. Thus was the law given by Moses in such a way as might startle, affright and humble men, that the *grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ*, might be the more welcome. The apostle largely describes this instance of the terror of that dispensation, as a foil to set off our privileges as christians in the light, liberty, and joy, of the New Testament dispensation; *Heb. xii. 18, &c.*

2. The impression which this made for the present upon the people; they must have had stupid hearts indeed if this had not affected them. (1.) *They removed and stood afar off*, ver. 18. Before God began to speak, they were thrusting forward to gaze, *chap. xix. 21*. But now they were effectually cured of their presumption, and taught to keep their distance. (2.) *They intreated that the word should not be so spoken to them any more* (*Heb. xii. 19*.) but begged that God would speak to them by Moses, ver. 19. hereby they obliged themselves to acquiesce in the mediation of Moses, they themselves nominating him as a fit person to deal between them and God; and promising to hearken to him, as to God's messenger; they have also obliged us to acquiesce in that method which infinite wisdom takes, of speaking to us by men like our selves, whose *terror shall not make us afraid, nor their hand be heavy upon us*. Once God tried the expedient of speaking to the children of men immediately, but it was found they could not bear it, it rather drove men from God than brought them to him, and as it proved in the issue, though it terrified them, it did not deter them from idolatry, for soon after this they worshipped the golden calf; let us therefore rest satisfied with the instructions given us by the scriptures and the ministry; for if we believe not them, neither would we be persuaded though God should speak to us in thunder and lightning, as he did from mount Sinai: here that matter was determined.

3. The encouragement Moses gave them explaining the design of God in this terror, ver. 20. *Fear not, i. e.* Think not that this thunder and fire is designed to consume you, which was the thing they feared, ver. 19. *lest we die*; thunder and lightning was one of the plagues of Egypt, but Moses would not have them think it was sent to them on the same errand on which it was sent to the Egyptians: no, it was intended, (1.) To prove them, to try how they could like dealing with God immediately, without a mediator, and so to convince them how admirably well God had chosen for them in putting Moses into that office. Ever since Adam fled upon hearing God's voice in the garden, sinful man could not bear either to speak to God, or hear from him immediately. (2.) To keep them to their duty, and prevent their sinning against God. He bids

them, fear not, and yet tells them that God thus spake to them that his fear might be before their faces. We must not fear with amazement, that fear which hath torment, and which only works upon the fancy for the present, and sets us a trembling, that genders to bondage, betrays us to Satan, and alienates us from God; but we must always have in our minds a reverence of God's majesty, a dread of his displeasure, and an obedient regard to his sovereign authority over us; this fear will quicken us to our duty, and make us circumspect in our walking; thus *stand in awe and sin not*, *Psal. iv. 4*.

4. The progress of their communion with God by the mediation of Moses, ver. 21. while the people continued to stand afar off, conscious of guilt, and afraid of God's wrath, Moses drew near unto the thick darkness; he was made to draw near, so the word is: Moses of himself durst not have ventured into the thick darkness, if God had not called him, and encouraged him, and, as some of the Rabbins suppose, sent an angel to take him by the hand, and lead him up. Thus it is said of the great Mediator, *I will cause him to draw near*, *Jer. xxx. 21*. and by him it is that we also are introduced, *Eph. iii. 12*.

22. And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. 23. Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. 24. An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me; and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings; thy sheep, and thine oxen: In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 25. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. 26. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.

Moses being gone into *the thick darkness where God was*, God there spoke in his hearing only, privately and without terror, all that which follows from hence to the end of *chap. 23*. which is mostly an exposition of the ten commandments, and he was to transmit it by word of mouth first, and afterwards in writing, to the people. The laws in these verses relate to God's worship.

1. They are here forbidden to make images for worship, ver. 22, 23. *Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven*, such was his wonderful condescension, much more than for some mighty prince to talk familiarly with a company of poor beggars, now *ye shall not make gods of silver*. This repetition of the second commandment comes in here, either (1.) As that which God had chiefly in his eye in giving them this law thus, because they were more addicted to idolatry than to any other sin forbidden by the ten commandments, and because that is a sin of all other most provoking to God. Ten commandments God had given them, but Moses is ordered to inculcate especially the two first upon them. They must not forget any of them, but they must be sure to remember those. Or, (2.) As that which might properly be inferred from God's speaking to them, as he had done. He had given them sufficient demonstration of his presence among them, they needed not make images of him as if he were absent. Besides; they had only seen that he talked with them, they had seen no manner of similitude, so that they could not make any image of God, and his manifesting himself to them only by a voice, plainly shewed them that they must not make any such image, but keep up their communion with God by his word, and not otherwise.

Two arguments are here hinted against image-worship.

(1.) That thereby they would affront God, intimated in that thou shalt not make them with me, though they pretended to worship them but as representations of God, yet really they made them rivals with God, which he would not endure.

(2.) That thereby they would abuse themselves, intimated in that, ye shall not make them unto you, while you think by them to assist your devotion, you will really corrupt it, and put a cheat upon yourselves. At first it should seem they made their images for worship of gold and silver, pretending by the richness of those metals to honour God; and by the brightness of them to affect themselves with his glory; but even in these they *changed the truth of God into a lie*, and so by degrees were justly given up to such strong delusions as to worship images of wood or stone.

2. They are here directed in making altars for worship: it is meant of occasional altars, such as they reared now in the wilderness before the tabernacle was erected, and afterwards upon special emergencies, for present use, such as Gideon built *Judg. vi. 24*. and Manoah; *Judg. xiii. 19*. and Samuel, *1 Sam. vii. 17*. and many others. We may suppose now the people of Israel were so much affected as it appears they were with this glorious discovery God had made of himself to them, many of them would incline in this pang of devotion to offer sacrifice to God; and



and it being necessary to a sacrifice that there be an altar, they are here appointed,

(1.) To make their altars very plain, either of earth or of unhewn stone, *ver.* 24; 25. That they might not be tempted to think of a graven image, they must not so much as hew the stones into shape that they made their altars of, but pile them up as they were, in the rough. This rule being prescribed before the ceremonial law was given; which appointed altars much more costly, intimates, that after the period of that law, plainness should be accepted as the best ornament of the external services of religion, and that gospel-worship should not be performed with external pomp and gaiety. The beauty of holiness needs no paint, nor do those do any service to the spouse of Christ, that dress her in the attire of a harlot, as the church of Rome doth: an altar of earth doth best.

(2.) To make their altars very low, (*ver.* 26.) so as that they might not go up by steps to it. That the higher the altar was, and the nearer heaven, the more acceptable the sacrifice was, was a foolish fancy of the heathen, who therefore chose high places; in opposition to which, and to shew that it is the elevation of the heart, not of the sacrifice, that God looks at, they were here ordered to make their altars low: we may suppose that the altars they reared in the wilderness, and other occasional altars, were designed only for the sacrifice of one beast at a time: but the altar in Solomon's temple, which was to be made much longer and broader; that it might contain many sacrifices at once, was made ten cubits high, that the height might bear a decent proportion to the length and breadth; and to that it was requisite they should go up by steps, which yet, no doubt, were so contrived as to prevent the inconvenience here spoken of, the *discovering of their nakedness* thereon.

3. They are here assured of God's gracious acceptance of their devotions, wherever they were paid, according to his will, *ver.* 24. *In all places where I record my name, or where my name is recorded, i. e. where I am worshipped in sincerity, I will come unto thee, and will bless thee.* Afterwards God chose one particular place wherein to record his name, but that being taken away now under the gospel, when men are willed to pray every where, this promise revives in its full extent, that wherever God's people meet in his name to worship him, he will be *in the midst of them*: he will honour them with his presence, and reward them with the gifts of his grace; there he will come unto them, and will bless them, and more than this we need not desire for the beautifying of our solemn assemblies.

## C H A P. XXI.

*The laws recorded in this chapter relate to the fifth and sixth commandments; and though not accommodated to our constitution, especially in point of servitude, nor the penalties annexed binding to us now, yet they are of great use for the explanation of the moral law, and the rules of natural justice.* 1. Here are several enlargements, upon the fifth commandment, which concerns particular relations. (1.) The duty of masters towards their servants, their men-servants, *ver.* 2—6. and maid-servants, *ver.* 7—11. (2.) The punishment of disobedient children that strike their parents, *ver.* 15. or curse them, *ver.* 17. 2. Upon the sixth commandment, which forbids all violence offered to the person of a man. Here is, 1. Concerning murder, *ver.* 12—14. 2. Man-stealing, *ver.* 16. 3. Assault and battery, *ver.* 18, 19. 4. Correcting a servant, *ver.* 20, 21. 5. Hurting a woman with child, *ver.* 22, 23. 6. The law of retaliation, *ver.* 24, 25. 7. Maiming a servant, *ver.* 26, 27. 8. An ox goring, *ver.* 26—32. 9. Damage by opening a pit, *ver.* 33, 34. 10. Cattle fighting, *ver.* 35, 36.

1. **N**OW these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. 2. If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. 3. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her masters, and he shall go out by himself. 5. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free: 6. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul, and he shall serve him for ever. 7. And if a man sell his daughter to be a maid-servant, she shall not go out as the men-servants do. 8. If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. 9. And if he have betrothed

her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. 10. If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish. 11. And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

The first verse is the general title of the laws contained in this and the two following chapters; some of them relating to the religious worship of God, but most of them relating to matters between man and man. Their government being purely a Theocracy, that which in other states is to be settled by human prudence, was directed among them by a divine appointment, so that happy was the constitution of their government. These laws are called judgments, because they are framed in infinite wisdom and equity, and because their magistrates were to give judgment according to them. God delivered them privately to Moses, and he was to communicate them to the people: in the doubtful cases that had hitherto occurred Moses had particularly enquired of God for them, as appeared *chap.* xviii. 15. But now God gave him statutes in general by which to determine particular cases, which likewise he must apply to other like cases that might happen, which falling under the same reason fell under the same rule.

He begins with the laws concerning servants, commanding mercy and moderation towards them. The Israelites had lately been servants themselves, and now they were become not only their own masters, but masters of servants too, lest they should abuse their servants as they themselves had been abused and ruled with rigour by the Egyptian task-masters, provision was made by these laws for the mild and gentle usage of servants. Note, If those that have had power over us have been injurious to us, that will not in the least excuse us if we be in like manner injurious to those that are under our power, but will rather aggravate it, because in that case we may the easier put our soul into their soul's stead.

Here is, 1. A law concerning men-servants, either sold by themselves or their parents through poverty, or by the judges for their crimes, yet even such (if Hebrews) were to continue in slavery but seven years at the most, in which time it was taken for granted they had sufficiently smarted for their folly or offence. At the seven years end the servant should either go out free, *ver.* 2, 3. or his servitude should from thence forward be his choice, *ver.* 5, 6. If he had a wife given him by his master, and children, he might either leave them and go out free himself, or if he had such a kindness for them that he would rather tarry with them in bondage, than go out at liberty without them, he was to have his ear bored through to the door-post, and serve till the death of his master, or the year of jubilee. By this law God taught, (1.) the Hebrew servant's generosity, and a noble love of liberty, for they were the Lord's freemen; and he must have a mark of disgrace put upon him who refused liberty when he might have it, tho' upon consideration otherwise laudable enough. Thus Christians being *bought with a price, and called unto liberty*, must not be the servants of men, not of the lusts of men, 1 *Cor.* vii. 23. There is a free and princely spirit that much helps to uphold a christian, *Psal.* li. 12. He likewise taught, (2.) the Hebrew masters not to trample upon their poor servants, knowing not only that they had been by birth upon the level with them, but that in a few years they would be so again: Thus christian masters must look with respect on believing servants, *Philem.* 16. This law will be further useful to us, (1.) To illustrate the right God hath to the children of believing parents, as such, and the place they have in his church. They are by baptism enrolled among his servants, because they are *born in his house*, for they are therefore *born unto him*, *Ezek.* xvi. 20. David owns himself God's servant, as he was *the son of his hand-maid*, *Psal.* cxvi. 16. and therefore intitled to protection, *Psal.* lxxxvi. 16. (2.) To explain the obligation which the great Redeemer laid upon himself to prosecute the work of our salvation, for he saith, *Psal.* xl. 6. *mine ears hast thou opened*, which seems to allude to this law. He loved his father, even his captive spouse, and the children that were given him, and would not go out free from his undertaking, but engaged to serve in it for ever, *Isa.* xlii. 1. Much more reason have we thus to engage ourselves to serve God for ever, we have all the reason in the world to love our master and his work, and to have our ears bored to his door-posts as those who desire not to go out free from his service, but to be found more and more free to it and in it, *Psal.* lxxxiv. 10.

2. Concerning maid-servants, whom their parents through extreme poverty had sold when they were very young, to such as they hoped would marry them when they grew up; if they did not, yet they must not sell them to strangers, but rather study how to make them amends for the disappointment; if they did, they must maintain them handsomely, *ver.* 7—11. Thus did God provide for the comfort and reputation of the daughters of Israel, and has taught husbands to give honour to their wives, tho' their extraction were never so mean, as to the *weaker vessels*, 1 *Pet.* iii. 7.



12. He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. 13. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. 14. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. 15. And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. 16. And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. 17. And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death. 18. And if men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed: 19. If he rise again, and walk abroad upon his staff, then shall he that smote him be quit: only he shall pay for the loss of his time, and shall cause him to be thoroughly healed. 20. And if a man smite his servant, or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. 21. Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money.

Here is, 1. A law concerning murder; he had lately said, *Thou shalt not kill*, here he provides, 1. For the punishing of wilful murder, ver. 12. *He that smiteth a man*, whether upon a sudden passion, or in malice premeditated, *so that he die*, the government must take care that the murderer be put to death, according to that ancient law, Gen. ix. 6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. God, that by his providence gives and maintains life, thus by his law protects it: So that mercy shewed to a wilful murderer is real cruelty to all mankind beside: such a one God here saith shall be taken even from his altar, ver. 14. to which he fled for protection; and if God will not shelter him, let him flee to the pit, and let no man stay him. 2. For the relief of such as killed by accident, *per infortunium*, as our law expresseth it, which also calls it chance-medly, when a man in doing a lawful act, without intent of hurt to any, happens to kill another, or as it is here described, *God delivers him into his hand*; nothing comes to pass by chance, but what seems to us purely casual is ordered by the divine providence, for wise and holy ends, secret to us. In this case God provided cities of refuge for the protection of those whose infelicity it was, but not their fault, to occasion the death of another, ver. 13. With us, who know no avengers of blood but the magistrates, the law itself is a sufficient sanctuary for those whose minds are innocent, though their hands be guilty, and there needs no other.

2. Concerning rebellious children; it is here made a capital crime, and to be punished with death, for children, either, (1.) to strike their parents, (ver. 15.) so as either to draw blood, or to make the place struck black and blue. Or, (2.) To curse their parents, ver. 17. if they profaned any name of God in doing it, as the rabbins say. Note, The undutiful behaviour of children towards their parents, is a very great provocation to God our common father, and if men do not punish it, he will. Those are perfectly lost to all virtue, and abandoned to all wickedness, that have broke through the bonds of filial reverence and duty to such a degree, as in word or action to abuse their own parents. What yoke will they bear that have shaken off this? Let children take heed of entertaining in their minds any such thought or passions towards their parents, as favour of undutifulness and contempt; for the righteous God *searcheth the heart*.

3. Here is a law against man-stealing; ver. 16. *He that steals a man, woman, or child, with design to sell them to the Gentiles*, for no Israelite would buy them, it was death by this statute; which is ratified by the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 10. where man-stealers are reckoned among those wicked ones, against whom laws must be made by christian princes.

4. Care is here taken, that satisfaction be made for hurt done to a person, though death do not ensue, ver. 18, 19. He that did the hurt must be accountable for damages, and pay not only for the cure, but for the loss of time: To which the Jews add, that he must likewise give some recompence both for the pain, and for the blemish, if there were any.

5. Direction is given what should be done, if a servant died by his master's correction. This servant must not be an Israelite, but a Gentile slave, as the negroes to our planters; and it is supposed that he smite him with a rod, and not with any thing that was likely to give a mortal wound, yet if he died under his hand, he should be punished for his cruelty, at the discretion of the judges, upon consideration of circumstances, ver. 20. But if he continued a day or two after the correction given, the master was supposed to suffer enough by losing his servant, ver. 21. Our law makes the death of a servant, by his master's reasonable beating of him, but chance-medly. Yet let all masters take heed of tyrannizing over their servants; the gospel teaches

them even to *forbear and moderate threatnings*, Eph. vi. 9. considering with holy Job, *What shall I do when God riseth up?* Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15.

22. If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25. Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. 26. And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eyes sake. 27. And if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. 28. If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die; then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. 29. But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death. 30. If there be laid on him a sum of money, then he shall give for the ransom of his life, whatsoever is laid upon him. 31. Whether he have gored a son, or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment shall it be done unto him. 32. If the ox shall push a man-servant, or maid-servant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. 33. And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein; 34. The owner of the pit shall make it good, and give money unto the owner of them, and the dead beast shall be his. 35. And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die, then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it, and the dead ox also they shall divide. 36. Or if it be known that the ox hath used to push in time past, and his owner hath not kept him in; he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead shall be his own.

Observe here, 1. The particular care which the law took of women with child, that no hurt should be done them, which might occasion their miscarrying. The law of nature obligeth us to be very tender in that case, lest the tree and fruit be destroyed together, ver. 22, 23. Women with child, who were thus taken under the special protection of the law of God, if they live in his fear, may still believe themselves under the special protection of the providence of God, and hope that they shall be saved in child-bearing. On this occasion comes in that general law of retaliation, which our Saviour refers to Mat. v. 38. *An eye for an eye*. Now, (1.) The execution of this law is not hereby put into the hands of private persons, as if every man might avenge himself; which would introduce universal confusion, and make men like the fishes of the sea. The tradition of the elders seems to have put this corrupt gloss upon it; in opposition to which our Saviour commands us to forgive injuries, and not to meditate revenge, Mat. v. 39. (2.) God often executes it in the course of his providence, making the punishment in many cases to answer the sin, as Jud. i. 7. *Isa. xxxiii. 1. Hab. ii. 13. Mat. xxvi. 52.* (3.) Magistrates ought to have an eye to this rule in punishing offenders, and doing right to those that are injured. Consideration must be had of the nature, quality, and degree of the wrong done, that reparation may be made to the party injured, and others deterred from doing the like; either *an eye shall go for an eye*, or the forfeited eye shall be redeemed by a sum of money. Note, He that doth wrong, must expect one way or other to receive according to the wrong he has done, Col. iii. 25. God sometimes brings *men violent dealing upon their own heads*, Psal. vii. 16. and magistrates are in this the ministers of his justice, that they are *avengers*, Rom. xiii. 4. and they shall not *bear the sword in vain*. 2. The care God took of servants, if their masters maimed them, though it were but so much as striking out a tooth, that should be their discharge, ver. 26, 27. This was intended, (1.) to prevent their being abused; masters would be careful not to offer them any violence, lest they should lose their service. (2.) To comfort them if they were abused; the loss of a limb should be the gaining of their liberty, which would do something towards balancing both the pain and disgrace they underwent.

Nay, 3. *Doth God take care for oxen?* Yes, it appears by the following laws in this chapter, that he doth, *for our sakes*, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Orders are here given what should be done, (1.) in case of hurt done by oxen, or any other brute creature, for the law doubtless was designed to extend to all parallel cases.



1. As an instance of God's care of the life of man (though forfeited a thousand times into the hands of divine justice) and in token of his detestation of the sin of murder, if an ox killed any man, woman, or child, the ox was to be *stoned*, ver. 28. And because the greatest honour of the inferior creatures is to be serviceable to man, the criminal is denied that honour, his *flesh shall not be eaten*. Thus God would keep up in the minds of his people a rooted abhorrence of the sin of murder, and every thing that was *barbarous*. 2. To make men careful that none of their cattle might do hurt, but that by all means possible mischief might be prevented; if the owner of the beast knew that he was mischievous, he must answer for the hurt done, and according as the circumstances of the case proved him to be more or less accessory; he must either be *put to death*, or ransom his life with a sum of money, ver. 29, 30, 31, 32. Some of our ancient books make this felony by the common law of England, and give this reason, The owner, by suffering his beast to go at liberty, which he knew to be mischievous, shews he was very willing hurt should be done. Note, It is not enough for us not to do mischief our selves, but we must take care that no mischief be done by those whom it is in our power to restrain, whether man or beast. (2.) In case of hurt done to oxen, or other cattle: If they fall into a pit and perish there, he that opened the pit must make good the loss, ver. 33, 34. Note, We must take heed not only of doing that which will be hurtful, but of doing that which may be so: It is not enough not to design and devise mischief, but we must contrive to prevent mischief, else we become accessory to our neighbour's damage: mischief done in malice, is the great transgression; but mischief done through negligence, and for want of due care and consideration, is not without fault, but ought to be reflected upon with great regret, according as the degree of the mischief is: especially we must be careful that we do nothing to make our selves accessory to the sins of others, by laying an occasion of offence in our brother's way, Rom. xiv. 13.

If cattle fight, and one kill another, the owners shall equally share in the loss, ver. 35. only, if the beast that had done the harm was known to the owner to have been mischievous, because he ought either to have killed him, or kept him up, he shall answer for the damage, ver. 36. The determinations of these cases carry with them the evidence of their own equity, and give such rules of justice as were then and are still of use, for the deciding of other like controversies that arise between man and man. But I conjecture that these cases might be instanced in, rather than others (though some of them seem minute) because they were then cases in fact actually depending before Moses; for in the wilderness where they lay closely encamped, and had their flocks and herds among them, such mischiefs as these last mentioned were likely enough to occur. That which we are taught by these laws is, that we be very careful to do no wrong either directly or indirectly, but if we have done wrong, we must be very willing to make satisfaction, and desirous that no body may lose by us.

## C H A P. XXII.

*The laws of this chapter relate, 1. To the eighth commandment, concerning theft, ver. 1—4. Trespas by cattle, ver. 5. Damage by fire, ver. 6. Trusts, ver. 7—13. Borrowing cattle, ver. 14, 15. or money, ver. 25—27. 2. To the seventh commandment. Against fornication, ver. 16, 17. Bestiality, ver. 19. 3. To the first table, forbidding witchcraft, ver. 18. Idolatry, ver. 20. Commanding to offer the first fruits, ver. 29, 30. 4. To the poor, ver. 21—24. 5. To the civil government, ver. 28. 6. To the peculiarity of the Jewish nation, ver. 31.*

1. **I**F a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. 2. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. 3. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him: for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double. 5. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field: of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution. 6. If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire, shall surely make restitution.

Here is, 1. The laws concerning theft, which are these, (1.) If a man steal any cattle (in which the wealth of those times mainly consisted) and they be found in his custody, he must restore double,

ver. 4. Thus he must both satisfy for the wrong; and suffer for the crime. But it was afterwards provided, that if the thief were touched in conscience, and voluntarily confessed it, before it was discovered or enquired into by any other, then he should only make restitution of what he had stolen, and add to it a fifth part, Lev. vi. 4, 5. (2.) If he had killed or sold the sheep or ox he had stolen, and thereby persisted in his crime, he must restore *five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep*, ver. 1. more for an ox than for a sheep, because the owner, besides all the other profit, lost the daily labour of his ox. This law teacheth us, that fraud and injustice will not only not enrich men, but it will impoverish them: if we unjustly get and keep that which is another's, it will not only waste it self, but it will consume that which is our own. (3.) If he were not able to make restitution, he must be sold for a slave, ver. 3. The court of judgment was to do it, and it is likely the person robbed had the money. Thus with us, in some cases, felons are transported into the plantations, where only Englishmen know what slavery is. (4.) If a thief break a house in the night, and was killed in the doing of it, his blood was upon his own head, and should not be required at the hand of him that shed it, ver. 2. As he that doth an unlawful act bears the blame of the mischief that follows to others, so likewise of that which follows to himself. A man's house is his castle, and God's law, as well as man's, sets a guard upon it; he that assaults it, it is at his peril. Yet if it were in the day-time that the thief was killed, he that killed him must be accountable for it, ver. 3. unless it were in the necessary defence of his own life. Note, We ought to be tender of the lives even of bad men; the magistrate must right us, and we must not revenge ourselves.

2. Concerning trespas, ver. 5. he that wilfully put his cattle into his neighbour's field, must make restitution of the best of his own. Our law makes a much greater difference between this and other thefts, than the law of Moses did. The Jews hence observed it as a general rule, that restitution must always be made of the best: and, that no man should keep any cattle that were likely to trespass upon his neighbours, or do them any damage: we should be more careful not to do wrong, than not to suffer wrong, because to suffer wrong is only an affliction, but to do wrong is a sin, and sin is always worse than affliction.

3. Concerning damage done by fire, ver. 6. he that designed only the burning of thorns, might become accessory to the burning of corn, and should not be held guiltless. Men of hot and eager spirits should take heed, lest while they pretend only to pluck up the tares, they root out the wheat also. If the fire did mischief, he that kindled it must answer for it, though it could not be proved that he designed the mischief. Men must suffer for their carelessness, as well as for their malice. We must take heed of beginning strife; for though it seem but little, we know not how great a matter it may kindle; which we must bear the blame of, if, with the madman, we cast fire-brands, arrows, and death, and pretend we mean no harm. It will make us very careful of ourselves, if we consider that we are accountable not only for the hurt we do, but for the hurt we occasion through inadvertency.

7. If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double. 8. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. 9. For all manner of trespas, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his: the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour. 10. If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it: 11. Then shall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods: and the owner of it shall accept thereof, and he shall not make it good. 12. And if it be stolen from him, he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. 13. If it be torn in pieces; then let him bring it for witness, and he shall not make good that which was torn. 14. And if a man borrow ought of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof being not with it; he shall surely make it good. 15. But if the owner thereof be with it, he shall not make it good: if it be an hired thing, it came for his hire.

These laws are, 1. Concerning trusts, ver. 7—13. If a man deliver goods, suppose to a carrier, to be convey'd, or to a warehouse-keeper, to be preserved, or cattle to a farmer to be fed upon a valuable consideration, and a special confidence reposed in the person they are lodged with, in case these goods be stolen or lost, perish



perish or be damaged, if it appear that it was not by any fault of the trustee, the owner must stand to the loss, otherwise he that has been false to his trust must be compelled to make satisfaction. The trustee must avow his innocency upon oath before the judges, if the case were such as afforded no other proof, and they were to determine the matter according as it appeared. This teacheth us, (1.) That we ought to be very careful of every thing we are entrusted with; as careful of it, though it be another's, as if it were our own. It is unjust and base, and that which all the world cries shame on, to betray a trust. (2.) That there is such a general failing of truth and justice upon earth, as gives too much occasion to suspect men's honesty, whenever it is their interest to be dishonest. (3.) That *an oath for confirmation is an end of strife*, Heb. vi. 16. It is called an oath of the Lord, *ver. 11.* because to him the appeal is made, not only as to a witness of truth, but as to an avenger of wrong and falsehood. Those that had offered injury to their neighbour by doing any unjust thing, yet it might be hoped had not so far debauched their consciences as to profane an oath of the Lord, and call the God of truth to be witness to a lye: perjury is a sin which natural conscience startles at as much as any other. The religion of an oath is very antient, and a plain indication of the universal belief of a God, and a providence, and a judgment to come. (4.) That magistracy is an ordinance of God, designed, among other intentions, to assist men both in discovering rights disputed, and recovering rights denied; and great respect ought to be paid to the determination of the judges. (5.) That there is no reason a man should suffer for that which he could not help: masters should consider this in dealing with their servants, and not rebuke that as a fault, which was a mischance, and which they themselves, had they been in their servants places, could not have prevented. 2. Concerning loans, *ver. 14, 15.* If a man (suppose) lent his team to his neighbour, if the owner were with it, or were to receive profit for the loan of it, whatever harm befel the cattle, the owner must stand to the loss of: but if the owner were so kind to the borrower as to lend it him gratis, and put such a confidence in him as to trust it from under his own eye, then if any harm happened, the borrower must make it good. Learn hence to be very careful not to abuse any thing that is lent us; it is not only unjust, but base and disingenuous, by rendering evil for good; we should much rather choose to lose ourselves, than that any should sustain loss by their kindness to us; *Alas, master, for it was borrowed*, 2 Kings vi. 5.

16. And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her; he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17. If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. 18. Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. 19. Whosoever lieth with a beast, shall surely be put to death. 20. He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. 21. Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. 23. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry, 24. And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

Here is, 1. A law, that he that debauched a young woman should be obliged to marry her, *ver. 16, 17.* If she were espoused to another, it was death to lie with her; but this is in case she was single. But if the father refused her to him, he was to give satisfaction in money for the injury and disgrace he had done her. This law puts an honour upon marriage, and shews likewise how ill a thing it is, and by no means to be allowed, that children should marry without their parent's consent: even here where the divine law appointed the marriage, both as a punishment to him that had done wrong, and a recompence to her that had suffered wrong, yet there was an express reservation for the father's power, if he denied his consent it must be no marriage.

2. A law which makes witchcraft a capital crime, *ver. 18.* Witchcraft not only gives that honour to the devil, which is due to God alone, but bids defiance to the divine providence, wages war with God's government, puts his work into the devil's hand, expecting him to do good and evil, and so making him indeed the God of this world; justly therefore was it punished with death, especially among a people that were blessed with a divine revelation, and cared for by divine providence above any people under the sun. By our law, consulting, covenanting with, invoking or employing any evil spirit to any intent whatsoever, and exercising any incantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person whatsoever, is made felony, without benefit of clergy; also pretending to tell where goods lost or stolen may be found, or the like, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offence with death. The justice of our law herein, is supported by the law of God here.

3. The unnatural and abominable sin of buggery is here made capital; such beasts in the shape of men are unfit to live; *ver. 19. Whosoever lies with a beast shall die.*

4. Idolatry also is made capital, *ver. 20.* God having declared himself jealous in this matter, the civil powers must be jealous in it too, and utterly destroy those persons, families, and places of Israel, that worshipped any god, save the Lord: this law might have prevented the woful apostasies of the Jewish nation in after-times, if those, that should have executed it, had not been ring-leaders in the breach of it.

5. A caution against oppression; because those who were empowered to punish other crimes, were themselves most in danger of this, God takes the punishing of it into his own hands. (1.) Strangers must not be abused, *ver. 21.* not wronged in judgment by the magistrates, not imposed upon in contracts, nor any advantage taken of his ignorance or necessity; no, nor must he be taunted, trampled upon, treated with contempt, or upbraided with his being a stranger; for all these were vexations, and would discourage strangers from coming to live among them, or strengthen their prejudices against their religion, to which by all kind and gentle methods they should endeavour to proselyte them. The reason given why they should be kind to strangers, is, *ye were strangers in Egypt*, and knew what it was to be vexed and oppressed there. Note, 1. Humanity is one of the laws of religion, and obligeth us particularly to be tender of those that lie most under disadvantages and discouragements; and extend our compassionate concern to strangers, and those that we are not obliged to by alliance, or acquaintance. Those that are strangers to us, are known to God, and he preserves them, *Psal. cxlvi. 9.* 2. Those that profess religion should study to oblige strangers, that they may thereby recommend religion to their good opinion, and take heed of doing any thing that may tempt them to think ill of it, or its professors, 1 *Pet. ii. 12.* 3. Those that have themselves been in poverty and distress, if providence enrich and enlarge them, ought to shew a particular tenderness towards those that are now in such circumstances as they were in formerly, doing now to them as they then wished to be done by. (2.) Widows and fatherless must not be abused, *ver. 22. ye shall not afflict them*, that is, ye shall comfort and assist them, and be ready upon all occasions to shew them kindness. In making just demands from them, their condition must be considered, who have lost those that should deal for them, and protect them; they are supposed to be unversed in business, destitute of advice, timorous, and of a tender spirit, and therefore must be treated with kindness and compassion, and no advantage taken against them, nor any hardship put upon them, which a husband or a father would have sheltered them from. For, 1. God takes particular cognizance of their case, *ver. 23.* having no one else to complain to, and appeal to, they will cry unto God, and he will be sure to hear them, for his law and his providence are guardians to the widows and fatherless, and if men do not pity them, and will not hear them, he will. Note, It is a great comfort to those who are injured and oppressed by men, that they have a God to go to, who will do more than give them the hearing; and it ought to be a terror to those who are oppressive, that they have the cry of the poor against them, which God will hear. Nay, 2. He will severely reckon with those that do oppress them; though they escape punishment from men. God's righteous judgments will pursue and overtake them, *ver. 24.* Men that have a sense of justice and honour will espouse the injured cause of the weak and helpless, and shall not the righteous God do it? Observe the equity of the sentence here passed upon those that oppress the widows and fatherless, their wives shall become widows, and their children fatherless; and the Lord is known by these judgments, which sometimes he executeth.

25. If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. 26. If thou at all take thy neighbours raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: 27. For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear: for I am gracious. 28. Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people. 29. Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. 30. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me. 31. And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field: ye shall cast it to the dogs.

Here is, 1. A law against extortion, in lending. (1.) They must not receive use for money from any that borrowed for necessity, *ver. 25.* as in that case, *Neh. v. 5, 7.* And such provision



sion the law made for the preserving of estates to their families by the year of Jubilee, that a people that had little concern in trade, could not be supposed to borrow money, but for necessity, and therefore it is generally forbidden among themselves; but to a stranger they were allowed to lend upon usury, whom yet they might not oppress: this law therefore, in the strictness of it, seems to have been peculiar to the Jewish state; but in the equity of it, it obligeth us to shew mercy to those we have advantage against, and to be content to share with those we lend to, in loss, as well as profit, if providence cross them; and upon this condition it seems as lawful to receive interest for my money, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in trade, as it is to receive rent for my land, which another takes pains with, improves, but runs the hazard of in husbandry. (2.) They must not take a poor man's bed-clothes in pawn; but if they did, must restore them by bed-time, *ver. 26, 27.* Those who lie soft and warm themselves, should consider the hard and cold lodging of many poor people, and not do any thing to make ill worse, or to add affliction to the afflicted.

2. A law against the contempt of authority, *ver. 28.* *Thou shalt not revile the gods,* i. e. the judges and magistrates, for their executing of these laws; they must do their duty, whoever suffer by it; magistrates ought not to fear the reproach of men, or their revilings, but to despise them as long as they keep a good conscience; but they that do revile them for their being a terror to evil works and workers, reflect upon God himself, and will have a great deal to answer for another day. We find those under a black character, and a heavy doom, that *despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities*, *Jud. 8.* Princes and magistrates are our fathers, whom the fifth commandment obligeth us to honour, and forbids us to revile: St. Paul applies this law to himself, and owns that he ought not to *speak evil of the ruler of his people*; no, not though he was then his most unrighteous persecutor, *Acts xxiii. 5.* see *Eccl. x. 20.*

3. A law concerning the offering of their first-fruits to God, *ver. 29, 30.* It was appointed before, *chap. xiii.* and it is here repeated, *The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me*; and much more reason have we to give ourselves, and all we have to God, who *spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.* The first ripe of their corn they must not delay to offer; there is danger, if we delay our duty, lest we wholly omit it; and by slipping the first opportunity, in expectation of another, we suffer Satan to cheat us of all our time. Let not young people delay to offer to God the first-fruits of their time and strength, lest their delays come at last to be denials through the deceitfulness of sin, and the more convenient season they promise themselves never comes. Yet it is provided that the firstlings of their cattle should not be dedicated to God till they were past seven days old, for then they began to be good for something. Note, God is the first and best, and therefore must have the first and best.

4. A distinction put between the Jews and all other people, *ye shall be holy men unto me*; and one mark of that honourable distinction appointed in their diet, which was, that they should not *eat any flesh that was torn of beasts*, *ver. 31.* not only because it was unwholesome, but because it was paltry, and base, and covetous, and a thing below those who were holy men unto God, to eat the leavings of the beasts of prey. We that are sanctified to God, must not be curious in our diet, but we must be conscientious, not feeding our selves without fear, but eating and drinking by rule, the rule of sobriety, to the glory of God.

## C H A P. XXIII.

*This chapter continues and concludes the acts that passed in the first session (if I may so call it) upon mount Sinai. Here is, 1. Some laws of universal obligation to all, relating especially to the ninth commandment, against bearing false witness, ver. 1. and giving false judgment, ver. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8. Also a law of doing good to our enemies, ver. 4, 5. and not oppressing strangers, ver. 9. 2. Some laws peculiar to the Jews: The sabbatical year, ver. 10, 11. the three annual feasts, ver. 14—17. with some laws pertaining thereto. 3. Gracious promises of the completing of the mercy God had begun for them, upon condition of their obedience, That God would conduct them through the wilderness, ver. 20—24. That he would prosper all they had, ver. 25, 26. That he would put them in possession of Canaan, ver. 27—31. But they must not mingle themselves with the nations, ver. 32, 33.*

1. **T**Hou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. 2. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many, to wrest judgment: 3. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. 4. If thou meet thine enemy's ox, or his ass, going astray, thou shalt surely bring it

back to him again. 5. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help with him. 6. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. 7. Keep thee far from a false matter: and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. 8. And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wife, and perverteth the words of the righteous. 9. Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Here are, 1. Cautions concerning judicial proceedings; it was not enough that they had good laws, better than ever any nation had, but care must be taken for the due administration of justice according to those laws.

(1.) The witnesses are here cautioned, that they neither occasion an innocent man to be indicted, by raising a false report of him, and setting common fame against him; nor assist in the prosecution of an innocent man, or one whom they do not know to be guilty, by putting their hand in swearing, as witnesses against him, *ver. 1.* Bearing false witness against a man, in a matter that toucheth his life, hath in it all the guilt of lying, perjury, malice, theft, murder, with the additional stains of colouring all with a pretence of justice, and involving many others in the same guilt. There is scarce any one act of wickedness that a man can possibly be guilty of, which has in it a greater complication of villainies than this hath. Yet the former part of this caution is to be extended to common conversation, and not only to judicial proceedings; so that slandering and back-biting is a degree of false-witness-bearing; a man's reputation lies as much at the mercy of every company, as his estate or life doth at the mercy of a judge or jury; so that he who raiseth, or knowingly spreads a false report against his neighbour, especially if the report be made to wise and good men, whose opinion one would desire to stand right in, sins as much against the laws of truth, justice and charity, as a false witness doth, with this further mischief, that he leaves it not in the power of the person injured to right himself. That which we translate, *thou shalt not raise*, the margin reads, *thou shalt not receive a false report*; for sometimes the receiver, in this case, is as bad as the thief; and a back-biting tongue would not do so much mischief as it doth, if it were not countenanced. Sometimes we cannot avoid hearing a false report, but we must not receive it, i. e. we must not hear it with pleasure and delight, as those that rejoice in iniquity; nor give credit to it, as long as there remains any cause to question the truth of it: This is charity to our neighbour's good name, and doing as we would be done by.

(2.) The judges are here cautioned not to pervert judgment.

1. They must not be over-ruled either by might or multitude to go against their consciences in giving judgment; *ver. 2.* with them causes were tried by a bench of justices, and judgment given by the major vote; in which case every particular justice must go according to truth, as it appeared to him upon the strictest and most impartial enquiry, though the multitude of the people, and their outcries, or, the sentence of the *Rabbim* (we translate it *many*) the more antient and honourable of the justices, went the other way: Therefore (as with us) among the Jews, the junior upon the bench voted first, that he might not be swayed or over-ruled by the authority of the senior: Judges must not respect the persons either of the parties, or of their fellow-judges. The former part of this verse also gives a general rule for all, as well as judges, *not to follow a multitude to do evil*: General usage will never excuse us in an ill practice; nor is the broad way ever the better or safer, for its being tracked and crowded: We must enquire what we ought to do, not what the most do; because we must be judged by our master, not by our fellow-servants; and it is too great a compliment to be willing to go to hell for company.

2. They must not pervert judgment, no not in favour of a poor man, *ver. 3.* right must in all cases take place, and wrong must be punished, and justice never biased, nor injury connived at, under pretence of charity and compassion. If a poor man be an ill man, and do an ill thing, it is foolish pity to let him fare the better for his poverty, *Deut. i. 16, 17.*

3. Neither must they pervert judgment in prejudice to a poor man, nor suffer him to be wronged, because he had not wherewithal to right himself, in such cases the judges themselves must become advocates for the poor, as far as their cause was good and honest; *ver. 6.* *Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor*; remember he is thy poor, bone of thy bone, thy poor neighbour, thy poor brother, let him not therefore fare the worse for his being poor.

4. They must dread the thoughts of assisting or abetting an ill thing; *ver. 7.* *Keep thee far from a false matter*: Do not only keep thee free from it, nor think it enough to say, thou art unconcerned in it, but keep thee far from it, dread it as a dangerous snare: The innocent and righteous thou wouldst not for all the world slay with thine own hands; keep thee therefore from



from a false matter, for thou knowest not but it may end in that, and the righteous God will not leave such wickedness unpunished. *I will not justify the wicked*; i. e. I will condemn him that unjustly condemns others. Judges themselves are accountable to the great judge.

5. They must not take bribes, *ver. 8.* They must not only not be swayed by a gift to give an unjust judgment, either to condemn the innocent, or acquit the guilty, or adjudge a man's right from him; but they must not so much as take a gift, lest it should have an ill influence upon them, and over-rule them contrary to their intentions, for it hath a strange tendency to blind those that otherwise would do well.

6. They must not oppress a stranger, *ver. 9.* Though aliens might not inherit lands among them, yet they must have justice done them, must peaceably enjoy their own, and be righted if they were wronged, though they were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. It was an instance of the equity and goodness of our law, that if an alien be tried for any crime except treason, the one half of his jury, if he desire it, shall be foreigners; they call it a trial *per medietatem linguæ*, a kind provision that strangers may not be oppressed. The reason here given is the same with that, chap. xxii. 21. *Ye were strangers*, which is here elegantly enforced, *ye know the heart of a stranger*; you know something of the griefs and fears of a stranger by sad experience, and therefore being delivered, can the easier put your souls into their souls stead.

2. Commands concerning neighbourly kindnesses, we must be ready to do all good offices, as there is occasion, for any body, yea even for those that have done us ill offices, *ver. 4, 5.* The command of loving our enemies, and doing good to them that hate us, is not only a new but an old commandment, *Prov. xxv. 21, 22.* Infer from hence, (1.) If we must do this kindness for an enemy, much more for a friend, though an enemy only is mentioned, because it is supposed, a man would not be un-neighbourly to any, unless such as he has a particular spleen against. (2.) If it be an ill thing not to prevent our enemies loss and damage, how ill a thing is it to occasion harm and loss to him, or any thing he has? (3.) If we must bring back our neighbour's cattle when they go astray, much more must we endeavour by prudent admonitions and instructions to bring back our neighbours themselves, when they go astray in any sinful path, see *Jam. v. 19.* And if we must endeavour to help up a fallen ass, much more should we endeavour by comforts and encouragements to help up a sinking spirit, *saying to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong.* We must seek the relief and welfare of others as our own, *Phil. ii. 4. If thou sayst, Behold we know it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it?* See *Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.*

10. And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: 11. But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest, and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beast of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive-yard. 12. Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thine hand-maid, and the stranger may be refreshed. 13. And in all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect: and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth. 14. Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. 15. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib: for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty: 16. And the feast of the harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of in-gathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. 17. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God. 18. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning. 19. The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mothers milk.

Here is, 1. The institution of the sabbatical year, *ver. 10, 11.* every seventh year the land was to rest, they must not plow or sow it at the beginning of the year, and then they could not expect any great harvest at the end of the year. But what the earth did produce of it self, should be eaten from hand to mouth, and not laid up. Now this was designed, (1.) To shew what a

plentiful land that was into which God was bringing them; that so numerous a people could have rich maintenance out of the products of so small a country; without foreign trade, and yet could spare the increase of every seventh year. (2.) To mind them of their dependance upon God their great landlord, and their obligation to use the fruit of their land as he should direct. Thus he would try their obedience in a matter that nearly touched their interest: Afterwards we find that their disobedience to this command was a forfeiture of the premises, *2 Chr. xxxvi. 21.* (3.) To teach them a confidence in the divine providence, while they did their duty; that as the sixth day's manna served for two day's meat, so the sixth year's increase should serve for two year's subsistence. Thus they must learn not to *take thought for their life*, *Matt. vi. 25.* If we be prudent and diligent in our affairs, we may trust providence to furnish us with the bread of the day in its day.

2. The repetition of the law of the fourth commandment concerning the weekly sabbath, *ver. 12.* Even in the year of rest they must not think the sabbath day was laid in common with the other days, but even that year it must be religiously observed; yet thus some have endeavoured to take away the observation of the sabbath, by pretending that every day must be a sabbath day.

3. All manner of respect to the gods of the heathen is here strictly forbidden, *ver. 13.* A general caution is prefixed to this, which hath reference to all these precepts, *In all things that I have said unto you, be circumspect.* We are in danger of missing our way on the right hand, and on the left, and it is at our peril if we do, therefore we have need to look about us. A man may ruin himself through meer carelessness, but he cannot save himself without great care and circumspection: particularly, since idolatry was a sin they were much addicted to, and would be greatly tempted to; they must endeavour to blot out the remembrance of the gods of the heathen, and must disuse and forget all their superstitious forms of speech, and never mention them but with detestation. In christian schools and academies (for it is in vain to think of reforming the play-houses) it were to be wished that the names and stories of the heathen deities, or demons rather, were not so commonly and familiarly used as they are, even with shews of respect, and sometimes with forms of invocation. Surely we have not so learned Christ.

4. Their solemn religious attendance on God in the place which he should choose, is here strictly required, *ver. 14, 15, 16, 17.* (1.) Thrice a year all their males must come together in a holy convocation, that they might the better know and love one another, and keep up their communion as a dignified and peculiar people. (2.) They must come together *before the Lord*, *ver. 17.* to present themselves before him, looking towards the place where his honour dwelt, and to pay their homage to him as their great Lord, from and under whom they held all their enjoyments. (3.) They must feast together before the Lord, eating and drinking together in token of their joy in God, and their grateful sense of his goodness to them, for *a feast is made for laughter*, *Eccl. x. 19.* O what a good master do we serve, who has made it our duty to *rejoice before him*, who feasts his servants when they are in waiting. Never let religion be called a melancholy thing, when its solemn services are solemn feasts. (4.) They must not *appear before God empty*, *ver. 15.* Some free-will offering or other they must bring in token of their respect and gratitude to their great benefactor. As then they must not come empty-handed, so now we must not come to worship God empty-hearted; our souls must be filled with grace, with pious and devout affections, holy desires towards him, and dedications of our selves to him, for *with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* (5.) The passover, pentecost, and feast of tabernacles, in spring, summer, and autumn, were the three times appointed for their attendance; not in winter, because travelling was then uncomfortable; not in the midst of their harvest, because then they were otherwise employed; so that they had no reason to say that he *made them to serve with an offering, or wearied them with incense.*

5. Some particular directions are here given about the three feasts, though not so fully as afterwards. (1.) As to the passover, it was not to be offered with leavened bread, for at that feast all leaven was to be cast out, nor was the fat of it to remain until the morning, lest it should smell ill, *ver. 18.* (2.) At the feast of pentecost when they were to begin their harvest, they must bring the *first of their first-fruits* to God, by the pious presenting of which the whole harvest was sanctified, *ver. 19.* (3.) At the feast of in-gathering, as it is called, *ver. 16.* they must give God thanks for the harvest mercies they had received, and must depend upon him for the next harvest, and must not think to receive benefit by that superstitious usage of some of the Gentiles, who, it is said, at the end of their harvest, *seethed a kid in its dam's milk*, and sprinkled that milk-pottage, in a magical way upon their gardens and fields, to make them more fruitful the next year. But Israel must abhor such foolish customs.



20. Behold, I send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. 22. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. 23. For mine angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. 24. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. 25. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water: and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. 26. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. 27. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. 28. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee. 29. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. 30. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. 31. And I will set thy bounds from the red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. 32. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

Three gracious promises are here made to Israel, to engage them to their duty, and encourage them in it; and each of the promises hath some needful precepts and cautions joined to it.

1. It is here promised that they should be guided and kept in their way through the wilderness to the land of promise, *Behold, I send an angel before thee*, ver. 20. *mine angel*, ver. 23. a created angel, say some, a minister of God's providence, employed in conducting and protecting the camp of Israel; that it might appear God took a particular care of them, he appointed one of his chief servants to make it his business to attend them, and see that they wanted for nothing. Others suppose it to be the son of God, the angel of the covenant; for the Israelites in the wilderness are said to tempt Christ; and we may as well suppose him God's messenger, and the church's redeemer, before his incarnation, as *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. And we may the rather think he was pleased to undertake the deliverance and conduct of Israel, because they were typical of his great undertaking. It is promised that this blessed angel should *keep them in the way*, though it lay through a wilderness first, and afterwards through their enemies country; thus God's spiritual Israel shall be kept through the wilderness of this earth, and from the insults of the gates of hell. And that he should bring them into the place, which God had not only designed, but prepared for them: And thus Christ has prepared a place for his followers, and will preserve them to it, for he is faithful to him that appointed him.

The precept joined with this promise, is, that they be observant of, and obedient to, this angel whom God would send before them, ver. 21. *Beware of him, and obey his voice* in every thing, *provoke him not* in any thing, for it is at your peril if you do, he will *visit your iniquity*. Note, 1. Christ is the author of salvation to those only that obey him. The word of command is, *Hear ye him*, Matt. xvii. 5. *Observe what he hath commanded*, Matt. xxviii. 20. 2. Our necessary dependance upon the divine power and goodness should awe us into obedience. We had best take heed of provoking our protector and benefactor; because if our defence depart from us, and the streams of his goodness be cut off, we are undone. Therefore *beware of him*, and carry it towards him with all possible reverence and caution, fear the Lord and his goodness. 3. Christ will be faithful to those that are faithful to him, and will espouse their cause who adhere to his, ver. 22. *I will be an adversary to thine adversaries*. The league shall be offensive and defensive, like that with Abraham, *I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee*. Thus is God pleased to twist his interests and friendships with his people.

2. It is promised that they should have a comfortable settlement in the land of Canaan, which they hoped now (though it proved otherwise) within a few months to be in the possession of, ver.

24, 25, 26. Observe, 1. How reasonable the conditions of this promise are, only that they should serve their own God, who was indeed the only true God, and not the gods of the nations, which were no gods at all, and which they had no reason at all to have any respect for. They must not only not worship their gods, but they must utterly overthrow them, in token of their great abhorrence of idolatry, their resolution never to worship idols themselves, and their care to prevent any other from worshipping them; as the converted conjurers *burnt their books*, Acts xix. 19. 2. How rich the particulars of this promise are. (1.) The comfort of their food, he shall *bless thy bread and thy water*; and God's blessing will make bread and water more refreshing and nourishing, than a feast of fat things, and wines on the lees, without that blessing. (2.) The continuance of their health. *I will take sickness away*, either prevent it, or remove it. The land shall not be visited with epidemical diseases, which are very dreadful, and sometimes have laid countries waste. (3.) The increase of their wealth; their cattle should not be barren, nor cast their young; which is mentioned as an instance of prosperity, *Job xxi. 10*. (4.) The prolonging of their lives to old age, *the number of thy days I will fulfil*; and they shall not be cut off in the midst by untimely deaths. Thus hath godliness the *promise of the life that now is*.

3. It is promised that they should conquer and subdue their enemies, the present occupants of the land of Canaan, who must be driven out to make room for them. This God would do, 1. Effectually by his power, ver. 27, 28. not so much by the sword and bow of Israel, as by the terrors which he would strike the Canaanites with. Though they were so obstinate as not to be willing to submit to Israel, resign their country, and retire elsewhere, which they might have done; yet they were so dispirited, that they were not able to stand before them. This completed their ruin; such power had the devil in them, that they would resist; but such power had God over them, that they could not. *I will send my fear before thee*; and they that fear, will soon flee. Hosts of hornets made way for the hosts of Israel; such mean creatures can God make use of for the chastising of his people's enemies; as in the plagues of Egypt. When God pleases, hornets can drive out Canaanites, as well as lions could, *Josh. xxiv. 12*. 2. He would do it gradually, in wisdom, ver. 29, 30. not all at once, but by little and little. As the Canaanites had kept possession till Israel was grown into a people, so there should still be some remains of them, till Israel should grow so numerous as to replenish the whole. Note, The wisdom of God is to be observed in the gradual advances of the church's interests. It is in real kindness to the church, that its enemies are subdued by little and little, for thus we are kept upon our guard, and in a continual dependance upon God. Corruptions are thus driven out of the hearts of God's people; not all at once, lest they should grow proud and secure, but by little and little; the old man is crucified, and therefore dies slowly. God, in his providence, oft delays mercy, because we are not ready for it. Canaan has room enough to receive Israel, but Israel is not numerous enough to occupy Canaan; we are not straitened in God; if we are straitened, it is in our selves. The land of Canaan is promised them, ver. 31. in its utmost extent, which yet they were not possessed of till the days of David; and by their sins they soon lost possession.

The precept annexed to this promise is, that they should not make any friendship, nor have any familiarity with idolaters, ver. 32, 33. They must not so much as sojourn in their land, unless they renounced their idolatry. Thus they must avoid the reproach of intimacy with the worshippers of false gods, and the danger of being drawn to worship with them. By familiar converse with idolaters, their dread and detestation of the sin would wear off; they would think it no harm, in compliment to their friends, to pay some respect to their gods, and so by degrees would be drawn into the fatal snare. Note, Those that would be kept from ill courses, must keep from ill company; it is dangerous living in a bad neighbourhood; others sins will be our snares, if we look not well to our selves. We must always look upon our greatest danger to be from those that would make us sin against God. Whatever friendship is pretended, that is really our worst enemy that draws us from our duty.

## C H A P. XXIV.

Moses, as mediator between God and Israel, having received divers laws and ordinances from God privately, in the three foregoing chapters, in this chapter, (1.) Comes down to the people, acquaints them with the laws he had received, and takes their consent to those laws, ver. 3. writes the laws, and reads them to the people, who repeat their consent, ver. 4, 7. and then by sacrifice, and the sprinkling of blood, ratifies the covenant between them and God, ver. 5, 6, 8. (2.) He returns to God again, to receive further directions. When he was dismissed from his former attendance, he was ordered to attend again, ver. 1, 2. He did so with seventy of the elders, to whom God made a discovery of his glory, ver. 9—11. Moses is ordered up into the mount, ver. 12, 13. the rest are ordered down to the people, ver. 14.



ver. 14. *The cloud of glory is seen by all the people on the top of mount Sinai, ver. 15—17. and Moses is there with God forty days, and forty nights, ver. 18.*

1. **A**ND he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and worship ye afar off. 2. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD; but they shall not come nigh, neither shall the people go up with him. 3. And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said, will we do. 4. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the LORD. 6. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said, will we do, and be obedient. 8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

The two first verses are the appointment of a second session upon mount Sinai, for the making of laws, when an end was put to the first. When a communion is begun between God and us, it shall never fail on his side, if it do not first fail on ours. Moses is directed to bring Aaron and his sons, and the seventy elders of Israel, that they might be witnesses of the glory of God, and that communion with him, to which Moses was admitted; and that their testimony might confirm the people's faith. In this approach, (1.) They must all be very reverent, *Worship ye afar off*, ver. 1. Before they came near they must worship. Thus we must enter into God's gates with humble and solemn adorations, and draw near as those that know our distance; and admire the condescensions of God's grace in admitting us to draw near. Are great princes approached with the profound reverences of the body? And shall not the soul that draws near to God be bowed before him? (2.) They must none of them come so near as Moses, ver. 2. They must come up to the Lord (and those that would approach to God must ascend) but Moses must come near alone; therein a type of Christ, who, as the high priest, entered alone into the most holy place.

In the following verses we have the solemn covenant made between God and Israel, and the exchanging of the ratifications; and a very solemn transaction it was, typifying the covenant of grace, between God and believers, through Christ.

1. Moses told the people the words of the Lord, ver. 3. He did not lead them blindfold into the covenant, nor teach them a devotion that was the daughter of ignorance; but laid before them all the precepts, general and particular, in the foregoing chapters; and fairly put it to them, Whether they were willing to submit to these laws or no?

2. The people unanimously consented to the terms proposed, without reservation or exception. *All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do.* They had before consented in general to be under God's government, Chap. xix. 8. here they consent in particular to these laws now given. *O that there had been such a heart in them!* How well were it, if people would but be always in the same good mind that sometimes they seem to be in! Many consent to the law, and yet do not live up to it; they have nothing to except against it, and yet will not persuade themselves to be ruled by it.

This is the tenor of the covenant, That if they would observe the foregoing precepts, God would perform the foregoing promises. Obey, and be happy. Here is the bargain made. Observe, 1. How it was engrossed in the book of the covenant. *Moses wrote the words of the Lord*, ver. 4. that there might be no mistake; probably he had written them as God dictated them on the mount. As soon as ever God had separated to himself a peculiar people in the world, he governed them by a written word, as he has done ever since, and will do while the world stands, and the church in it. Moses having engrossed the articles of agreement, concluded upon between God and Israel, *read them in the audience of the people*, ver. 7. that they might be perfectly apprized of the thing, and might try whether their second thoughts were the same with their first, upon the whole matter. And we may suppose they were so; for their words, ver. 7. are the same with what they were, ver. 3. but something stronger; *All that the Lord hath*

*said*, (be it good, or be it evil, to flesh and blood, Jer. xlii. 6.) *we will do*, so they had said before; but now they add, *and will be obedient*; not only we will do what hath been commanded, but in every thing, which shall further be ordained, *we will be obedient*. Bravely resolved! if they had but stuck to their resolution. See here, That God's covenants and commands are so uncontestably equitable in themselves, and so highly advantageous to us, that the more we think of them, and the more plainly and fully they are set before us, the more reason we shall see to comply with them.

2. How it was sealed by the blood of the covenant, that Israel might receive strong consolations from the ratifying of God's promises to them, and might lie under strong obligations from the ratifying of their promises to God. Thus hath infinite wisdom devised means that we may be confirmed both in our faith, and in our obedience; may be both encouraged in our duty, and engaged to it. The covenant must be made by sacrifice, *Psal. l. 5.* because since man hath sinned, and forfeited his creator's favour, there can be no fellowship by covenant, till there is first friendship and atonement by sacrifice. [1.] In preparation therefore for the parties interchangeably putting their seals to this covenant, (1.) Moses builds an altar to the honour of God, which was principally intended in all the altars that were built, and which was the first thing to be looked at in the covenant they were now to seal. No addition to the perfections of the divine nature can be made by any of his dealings with the children of men, but in them his perfections are manifested and magnified, and his honour shewed forth; therefore he will now be represented by an altar, to signify, that all he expected from them was, that they should do him honour; and that, being his people, they should be to him for a name and a praise. (2.) He erects twelve pillars according to the number of the tribes; these were to represent the people, the other party to the covenant; and we may suppose they were set up over-against the altar, and that Moses, as mediator, passed to and fro between them. Probably each tribe set up and knew its own pillar, and their elders stood by it. (3.) He appointed sacrifices to be offered upon the altar, ver. 5. burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, which yet were designed to be expiatory. We are not concerned to enquire who these young men were, that were employed in offering these sacrifices; for Moses was himself the priest, and what they did was purely as his servants, by his order and appointment. No doubt they were men who by their bodily strength were qualified for the service, and by their station among the people were fittest for the honour. [2.] Preparation being thus made, the ratifications were very solemnly exchanged.

1. The blood of the sacrifice which the people offered was (part of it) sprinkled upon the altar, ver. 6. which signified the peoples dedicating themselves, their lives, and beings, to God, and to his honour. In the blood (which is the life) of the dead sacrifices, all the Israelites were presented unto God as living sacrifices, *Rom. xii. 1.*

2. The blood of the sacrifice which God had owned and accepted was (the remainder of it) sprinkled, either upon the people themselves, ver. 8. or upon the pillars that represented them, which signified God's gracious conferring his favour upon them, and all the fruits of that favour; and his giving them all the gifts they could expect or desire from a God reconciled to them, and in covenant with them by sacrifice. This part of the ceremony was thus explained, *Behold the blood of the covenant*; see here how God sealed to you to be a God, and you seal to him to be to him a people; his promises to you, and yours to him, are both *yea, and Amen.*

Thus our Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant (of whom Moses was a type) having offered up himself a sacrifice upon the cross, that his blood might be indeed the blood of the covenant, he sprinkled it upon the altar in his intercession, *Heb. ix. 12.* and sprinkles it upon his church by his word and ordinances, and the influences and operations of the spirit of promise, by whom we are sealed. He himself seemed to allude to this solemnity, when in the institution of the Lord's supper he said, *This cup is the New Testament or covenant, in my blood.* Compare with this, *Heb. ix. 19, 20.*

9. Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. 10. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. 11. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

The people having, besides their submission to the ceremony of the sprinkling of blood, declared their well-pleasedness in their God and his law, again and again, God here gives to their representatives some special tokens of his favour to them; for God meeteth him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, and admits them nearer to him than they could have expected. Thus in the New Testament church, we find the *four living creatures*, and the



the four and twenty elders, honoured with places round the throne, being redeemed unto God, by the blood of the lamb which is in the midst of the throne, Rev. iv. 4, 7. v. 8, 9.

Observe, 1. They saw the God of Israel, ver. 10. i. e. they had some glimpse of his glory, in light and fire, though they saw no manner of similitude, and his being no man hath seen or can see, 1 Tim. vi. 16. They saw the place where the God of Israel stood; so the Seventy, something that came near a similitude, but was not; whatever they saw, it was certainly something of which no image or picture could be made, and yet enough to satisfy them that God was with them of a truth.

Nothing is described but that which was under his feet; for our conceptions of God are all below him, and fall infinitely short of being adequate. They saw not so much as God's feet, but at the bottom of the brightness they saw, (such as they never saw before or after) and, as the foot-stool or pedestal of it, was a most rich and splendid pavement, as it had been of sapphires, azure, or sky-coloured. The heavens themselves are the pavement of God's palace, and his throne is above the firmament: See how much better wisdom is than the precious onyx or the sapphires, for wisdom was from eternity God's delight, Prov. viii. 30. and lay in his bosom, but the sapphires are the pavement under his feet; there let us put all the wealth of this world, and not in our hearts.

2. Upon the nobles or elders of Israel, he laid not his hand, ver. 11. Though they were men, the dazzling splendor of his glory did not overwhelm them; but it was so moderated, (Job xxvi. 9.) and they were so strengthened, (Dan. x. 19.) that they were able to bear it: Nay, though they were sinful men, and obnoxious to God's justice, yet he did not lay his punishing, avenging hand upon them, as they feared he would. When we consider what a consuming fire God is, and what stubble we are before him, we shall have reason to say in all our approaches to him, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.* 3. They saw God, and did eat and drink; they had not only their lives preserved, but their vigor, courage, and comfort; it cast no damp upon their joy, but rather increased and elevated it. They feasted upon the sacrifice, before God, in token of their cheerful consent to the covenant now made, their grateful acceptance of the benefits of it, and their communion with God in pursuance of that covenant. Thus believers eat and drink with Christ at his table, Luke xxii. 30. Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of our father, and drink of the wine new there.

12. And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments, which I have written; that thou mayst teach them. 13. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua; and Moses went up into the mount of God. 14. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them. 15. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. 16. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

The publick ceremony of sealing the covenant being over, Moses is called up to receive further instructions, which we have in the following chapters.

(1.) He is called up into the mount, and there he remained six days at some distance: orders are given him, ver. 12. Come up to the mount, and be there, i. e. expect to continue there for some considerable time. Those that would have communion with God, must not only come to ordinances, but they must abide by them: Blessed are they that dwell in his house, not that only call there; come up, and I will give thee a law that thou mayst teach them. Moses taught them nothing but what he had received from the Lord, and he received nothing from the Lord but what he taught them; for he was faithful both to God and Israel, and did neither add nor diminish, but kept close to his instructions.

Having received these orders, 1. He appointed Aaron and Hur to be as lords justices in his absence, to keep the peace and good order in the congregation, ver. 14. The care of his government he would leave behind him when he went up into the mount, that he might not have that to distract his mind, and yet he would not leave the people as sheep having no shepherd, no, not for a few days: good princes find their govern-

ment a constant care, and their people find it a constant blessing. 2. He took Joshua up with him into the mount, ver. 13. Joshua was his minister, and it would be a satisfaction to him, to have him with him as a companion during the six days that he tarried in the mount, before God called to him. Joshua was to be his successor, and therefore thus he was honoured before the people above the rest of the elders, that they might afterwards the more readily take him for their governor; and thus he was prepared for service, by being trained up in communion with God. Joshua was a type of Christ, and (as the learned bishop Pierfon well observes) Moses takes him with him into the mount, because without Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, there is no looking into the secrets of heaven, nor approaching the glorious presence of God. 3. A cloud covered the mount six days; a visible token of God's special presence there, for he so shews himself to us, as at the same time to conceal himself from us: He lets us know so much as to assure us of his presence, power, and grace, but intimates to us, that we cannot find him out to perfection. During these six days Moses staid waiting upon the mountain, for a call into the presence chamber, ver. 15, 16. God thus tried the patience of Moses, and his obedience to that command, ver. 12. *be there.* If Moses had been tired before the seventh day, (as Saul, 1 Sam. xiii. 8.) and had said, what should I wait for the Lord any longer, he had lost the honour of entering into the cloud; but communion with God is worth waiting for. And it is fit we should address our selves to solemn ordinances with a solemn pause, taking time to compose our selves, Psal. cviii. 1.

(2.) He is called up into the cloud, on the seventh day, probably on the sabbath day, ver. 16. Now the thick cloud opened in the sight of all Israel, and the glory of the Lord broke forth like devouring fire, ver. 17. God, even our God is a consuming fire, and so he was pleased to manifest himself in the giving the law, that knowing the terrors of the Lord we may be persuaded to obey, and may by them be prepared for the comforts of the gospel, and that the grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ may be the more acceptable.

Now, 1. The entrance of Moses into the cloud was very wonderful; *Moses went into the midst of the cloud*, ver. 18. It was an extraordinary presence of mind, which the grace of God furnished him with, by his six days preparation; else he durst not have ventured into the cloud, especially when it broke out in devouring fire. Moses was sure he that called him would protect him; and even those glorious attributes of God which are most terrible to the wicked, the saints with a humble reverence rejoice in. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, is able to dwell even with this devouring fire, as we are told, Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15. There are persons and works that will abide the fire, 1 Cor. iii. 12, &c. and some that will have confidence before God.

2. His continuance in the cloud was no less wonderful; he was there *forty days and forty nights*. It should seem the six days, ver. 16. were not part of the forty, for during those six days, Joshua was with Moses, who did eat of the manna, and drink of the brook mentioned, Deut. ix. 21. and while they were together, it is probable Moses did eat and drink with him, but when Moses was called into the midst of the cloud, he left Joshua without, who continued to eat and drink daily while he waited for Moses's return, but from thence forward Moses fasted. Doubtless God could have said what he had now to say to Moses in one day, but for the greater solemnity of the thing, he kept him with him in the mount *forty days, and forty nights*. We are hereby taught to spend much time in communion with God, and to think that time best spent, which is so spent. They that would get the knowledge of God's will, must meditate thereon day and night.

## C H A P. XXV.

At this chapter begins an account of the orders and instructions God gave to Moses upon the mount, for the erecting and furnishing of a tabernacle to the honour of God. Here is, 1. Orders given for a collection to be made among the people for this purpose, ver. 1—9. 2. Particular instructions, (1.) Concerning the ark of the covenant, ver. 10—22. (2.) The table of shew-bread, ver. 23—30. (3.) The golden candlestick, ver. 31. ad fin.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering. 3. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, 4. And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats hair, 5. And rams skins died red, and badgers skins, and shittim-wood, 6. Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and



and for sweet incense, 7. Onyx-stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breast-plate. 8. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell amongst them. 9. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

We may suppose, that when Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and abode there so long, where the holy angels attended the *Shechinah*, or divine Majesty, he saw and heard very glorious things relating to the upper world, but they were things which it was not lawful or possible to utter, and therefore in the records he kept of the transactions there, he saith nothing to satisfy the curiosity of those who would intrude into the things which they have not seen, but writes that only which he was to speak to the children of Israel. For the scripture is designed to direct us in our duty, not to fill our heads with speculations, or to please our fancies.

In these verses, God tells Moses his intention in general, that the children of Israel should build him a sanctuary, for he designed to dwell among them, ver. 8. and some think that though there were altars and groves used for religious worship before this, yet there never was any house, or temple built for sacred uses in any nation, before this tabernacle was erected by Moses, and that all the temples which were afterwards so much celebrated among the heathen, took rise from this, and pattern by it. God had chosen the people of Israel to be a peculiar people to himself, above all people, among whom divine revelation, and a religion according to it, should be lodged and established: He himself would be their king. As their king he had already given them laws for the government of themselves and their dealings one with another, with some general rules for religious worship, according to the light of reason, and the law of nature, in the ten commandments, and the following comments upon them. But this was not thought sufficient to distinguish them from other nations, or to answer the extent of that covenant God would make with them to be *their God*, and therefore he orders a royal palace to be set up among them for himself here, called a *sanctuary*, or *holy place*, or *habitation*, of which it is said, Jer. xvii. 12. *A glorious high throne, from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.* This sanctuary is to be considered, (1.) As ceremonial, consonant to the other institutions of that dispensation, which consisted in carnal ordinances, Heb. ix. 10. hence it is called a worldly sanctuary, Heb. ix. 1. God in it kept his court, as Israel's king. 1. There he manifested his presence among them, and it was intended for a sign or token of his presence, that while they had that in the midst of them they might never again ask, *Is the Lord among us, or not?* And because in the wilderness they dwelt in tents, even this royal palace was ordered to be a tabernacle too, that it might move with them, and might be an instance of the condescension of the divine favour.

2. There he ordered his subjects to attend him with their homage and tribute. Thither they must come to consult his oracles, thither they must bring their sacrifices, and there all Israel must meet to pay their joint-respects to the God of Israel. (2.) As typical; the holy places made with hands, were the figures of the true, Heb. ix. 24. The gospel church is the true tabernacle which the Lord hath pitched, and not man, Heb. viii. 2. The body of Christ, in and by which he made atonement, was the greater and more perfect tabernacle, Heb. ix. 11. *The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*, as in a tabernacle.

Now when Moses was to erect this palace, it was requisite he should first be instructed where he must have the materials, and where he must have the model, for he could neither contrive it by his own ingenuity, nor build it at his own charge, he is therefore directed here concerning both.

1. The people must furnish him with the materials, not by a tax imposed upon them, but by a voluntary contribution. This is the first thing concerning which orders are here given, ver. 2. *Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering*; and all the reason in the world they should, for (1.) It was God himself that had not only enlarged them, but enriched them with the spoils of the Egyptians; he had instructed them to borrow, and he had inclined the Egyptians to lend, so that from him they had their wealth, and therefore it was fit they should devote it to him, and use it for him, and thus make a grateful acknowledgment of the favours they had received. Note, 1. The best use we can make of our worldly wealth, is, to honour God with it, in works of piety and charity. 2. When we have been blessed with some remarkable success in our affairs, and have had, as we say, a good hit, it may be justly expected that we should do something more than ordinary, for the glory of God, consecrating our gain in some reasonable proportion of it to the Lord of the whole earth, Mic. iv. 13. (2.) The sanctuary that was to be built, was intended for their benefit and comfort, and therefore they must be at the expence of it. The had been unworthy of the privilege, if they

had grudged at the charge. They might well afford to offer liberally for the honour of God, while they lived upon free quarter, having food for themselves and their families, rained upon them daily from heaven. We also must own that we have our all from God's bounty, and therefore ought to use all for his glory. Since we live upon him, we must live to him.

This offering must be given willingly, and with the heart, that is, 1. It was not prescribed to them what or how much they must give, but it was left to their generosity, that they might shew their good-will to the house of God, and the offices thereof, and might do it with a holy emulation, the zeal of a few *provoking many*, 2 Cor. ix. 2. We should ask not only what *must we do*, but what *may we do* for God. 2. Whatever they gave they must give it cheerfully, and not grudgingly, and with reluctance, for *God loves a cheerful giver*, 2 Cor. ix. 7. What is laid out in the service of God, we must reckon well bestowed.

The particulars are here mentioned which they must offer, ver. 3—7. all of them things that there would be occasion for in the tabernacle, or the service of it. Some observe that here was gold, silver, and brass, provided, but no iron; that is the military metal, and this was to be a house of peace. Every thing that was provided was very rich and fine, and the best of the sort; for God who is the best, should have the best.

2. God himself would furnish him with the model, ver. 9. *According to all that I shew thee.* God shewed him an exact plan of it, in little, which he must conform to in all points; Thus Ezekiel saw in vision the form of the house, and the fashion thereof, Ezek. xliii. 11. Note, Whatsoever is done in God's service must be done by his direction, and not otherwise. Yet God did not only shew him the model, but gave him also particular directions how to frame the tabernacle, according to that model, in all the parts of it, which he goes over distinctly in this and the following chapters. When Moses, in the beginning of Genesis, was to describe the creation of the world, though it be such a stately and curious fabrick, and made up of such a variety, and vast number of particulars, yet he gave a very short and general account of it, and nothing to what the wisdom of this world would have desired and expected from one that wrote by divine revelation; but when he comes to describe the tabernacle, he doth it with the greatest niceness and accuracy imaginable. He that gave us no account of the lines and circles of the globe, the diameter of the earth, or the height and magnitude of the stars, has told us particularly the measure of every board and curtain of the tabernacle; for God's church and instituted religion is more precious to him, and more considerable than all the rest of the world. And the scriptures were written not to describe to us the works of nature, a general view of which is sufficient to lead us to the knowledge and service of the creator, but to acquaint us with the methods of grace, and those things which are purely matters of divine revelation. The blessedness of the future state is more fully represented under the notion of a new Jerusalem, than under the notion of new heavens, and a new earth.

10. And they shall make an ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it: and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about. 12. And thou shalt cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in the four corners thereof; and two rings shall be in the one side of it, and two rings in the other side of it. 13. And thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. 14. And thou shalt put the staves into the rings, by the sides of the ark, that the ark may be born with them. 15. The staves shall be in the rings of the ark: they shall not be taken from it. 16. And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee. 17. And thou shalt make a mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. 18. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold: of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-seat. 19. And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another: toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. 21. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. 22. And there



there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

The first thing which is here ordered to be made, is the ark and its appurtenances, the furniture of the most holy place, and the special token of God's presence; the tabernacle was erected to be the receptacle of that.

1. The ark it self was a chest or coffer, in which the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, were to be honourably deposited, and carefully kept. The dimensions of it are exactly ordered; if the Jewish cubit was, as some learned men compute, three inches longer than our half-yard, (twenty-one inches in all) this chest or cabinet was about fifty-two inches long, thirty-one broad, and thirty-one deep. It was overlaid within and without with thin plates of gold. It had a crown, or cornish of gold, round it, rings and staves to carry it with; and in it he must put the testimony, *ver.* 10—16. The tables of the law are called the testimony, because God did in them testify his will; his giving them that law, was in token of his favour to them; and their acceptance of it, was in token of their subjection and obedience to him. This law was a testimony to them, to direct them in their duty, and would be a testimony against them if they did transgress. The ark is called the *ark of the testimony*, *Exod.* xxx. 6. and the tabernacle; the *tabernacle of testimony*, *Numb.* x. 11. or witness, *Acts* vii. 44. The gospel of Christ is also called a testimony, or witness, *Matt.* xxiv. 14. It is observable,

(1.) That the tables of the law were carefully preserved in an ark for the purpose, to teach us to make much of the word of God, and to hide it in our hearts, in our innermost thoughts, as the ark was placed in the holy of holies. It intimates likewise the care which divine providence ever did, and ever will take, to preserve the records of divine revelation in the church, so that even in the latter days there shall be seen in his temple the ark of his testament. See *Rev.* xi. 19.

(2.) That this ark was the chief token of God's presence, which teacheth us, that the first and great evidence and assurance of God's favour, is the putting of his law in the heart. God dwells where that rules, *Heb.* viii. 10.

(3.) That provision was made for the carrying of this ark about with them in all their removes; which intimates to us, that wherever we go, we should take our religion along with us, *always bearing about with us* the love of the lord Jesus, and his law.

2. The mercy-seat was the covering of the ark or chest, made of solid gold, exactly to fit the dimensions of the ark, *ver.* 17, 21. This propitiatory covering, as it might well be translated, was a type of Christ, the great propitiation, whose satisfaction fully answers the demands of the law, covers our transgressions, and comes between us and the curse we deserve. Thus he is the *end of the law for righteousness*.

3. The cherubims of gold were fixed to the mercy-seat, and of a piece with it, and spread their wings over it, *ver.* 18. It is supposed these cherubims were designed to represent the holy angels, who always attended the *Shechinah*, or divine Majesty, particularly at the giving of the law; not by any effigies of an angel, but some emblem of the angelical nature; probably some one of those four faces spoken of, *Ezek.* i. 10. Whatever the faces were, they looked one towards another, and both downwards towards the ark, while their wings were stretched out so as to touch one another. The apostle calls them *Cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat*, *Heb.* ix. 5. It notes their attendance upon the redeemer, to whom they were ministering spirits; their readiness to do his will, their special presence in the assemblies of saints, *Psal.* lxxviii. 17. *1 Cor.* xi. 10. and their desire to look into the mysteries of the gospel, which they diligently contemplate, *1 Pet.* i. 12. God is said to dwell or sit *between the cherubims*, on the mercy-seat, *Psal.* lxxx. 2. and from thence he here promiseth, for the future, to meet with Moses, and to *commune with him*, *ver.* 22. There he would give law, and there he would give audience, as a prince on his throne; and thus he manifests himself willing to be reconciled to us, and keeps up communion with us in and by the mediation of Christ. In allusion to this mercy-seat, we are said to come boldly to *the throne of grace*, *Heb.* iv. 16. for we are *not under the law*, that is covered, *but under grace*, that is displayed; its wings are stretched out, and we are invited to come *under the shadow* of them, *Ruth* ii. 12.

23. Thou shalt also make a table of shittim-wood: two cubits shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25. And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand-breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to

the border thereof round about. 26. And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that are on the four-feet thereof. 27. Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be born with them. 29. And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shalt thou make them. 30. And thou shalt set upon the table shew-bread before me alway.

Here is, 1. A table ordered to be made of wood overlaid with gold, which was to stand not in the holy of holies (nothing was in that but the ark only with its appurtenances) but in the outer part of the tabernacle, called the sanctuary, or holy place, *Heb.* ix. 2, 23, &c. There must also be the usual furniture of the side-board, dishes and spoons, &c. and all of gold, *ver.* 29.

2. This table was to be always spread, and furnished with the shew-bread (*ver.* 30.) or bread of faces, twelve loaves, one for each tribe, set in two rows, six in a row; see the law concerning them, *Lev.* xxiv. 5, &c. The tabernacle being God's house, in which he was pleased to say he would dwell among them, he would shew that he kept a good house. In the royal palace, it was fit there should be a royal table. Some make the twelve loaves to represent the twelve tribes, set before God as his people, and *the corn of his floor*, as they are called, *Isa.* xxi. 10. As the ark signified God's being present with them, so the twelve loaves signified their being presented to God. This bread was designed to be, 1. A thankful acknowledgment of God's goodness to them, in giving them their daily bread, manna in the wilderness, where he prepared a table for them, and in Canaan, the corn of the land. Hereby they owned their dependance upon providence, not only for the corn in the field, which they gave thanks for, in offering the sheaf of first-fruits, but for the bread in their houses, that when it was brought home, God did not *blow upon it*, *Hag.* i. 9. Christ has taught us to pray every day for the bread of the day. 2. A token of their communion with God, this bread on God's table being made of the same corn with the bread on their own tables, God and Israel did as it were eat together, as a pledge of friendship and fellowship, he supped with them, and they with him. 3. A type of the spiritual provision which is made in the church, by the gospel of Christ, for all that are made priests to our God. *In our Father's house there is bread enough, and to spare*, a loaf for every tribe. All that attend in God's house shall be abundantly satisfied with the goodness of it, *Psal.* xxxvi. 8. Divine consolations are the continual feast of holy souls, however there are those to whom *the table of the Lord*, and the *meat thereof*, because it is plain bread, *is contemptible*, *Mal.* i. 12. Christ hath a *table in his kingdom*, at which all his saints shall for ever eat and drink with him, *Luke* xxii. 29.

31. And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers shall be of the same. 32. And six branches shall come out of the sides of it: three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side. 33. Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34. And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers. 35. And their shall be a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36. Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold. 37. And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38. And the tongs thereof, and the snuff-dishes thereof, shall be of pure gold. 39. Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40. And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

The next thing ordered to be made for the furnishing of God's palace, was a rich stately candlestick all of pure gold, not hollow, but solid. The particular directions here given concerning it shew, (1.) That it was very magnificent, and a great ornament to the place, it had many branches drawn from the main shaft, which



which had not only their bowls to put the oil and the kindled wick in for necessity, but they had knops and flowers for ornament. (2.) That it was very convenient, and admirably well contrived both to scatter the light, and to keep the tabernacle clean from smoke, and snuffs. (3.) It was very significant. The tabernacle had no windows by which to let in the light of the day, all its light was candle-light, which notes the comparative darkness of that dispensation, while the sun of righteousness was not as yet risen, nor had the *day-star* from on high yet visited his church; yet God left not himself without witness, nor them without instruction; the commandment was a lamp, and the law a light, and the prophets were branches from that lamp which gave light in their several ages to the Old Testament church. The church is still dark, as the tabernacle was, in comparison with what it will be in heaven; but the word of God is the candlestick, *a light shining in a dark place*, 2 Pet. i. 19. and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. The Spirit of God in his various gifts and graces, is compared to the *seven lamps* which burn before the throne, Rev. iv. 5. The churches are golden candlesticks, the lights the world, *holding forth the word of life*, as the candlestick doth the light, Phil. ii. 15, 16. Ministers are to light the lamps, and snuff them, ver. 37. by opening the scriptures. The treasure of this light is now put into *earthen vessels*, 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. The branches of the candlestick spread every way, to note the diffusing of the light of the gospel into all parts, by the ministry, Matt. v. 14, 15. There is a *diversity of gifts*, but the same Spirit gives to each to profit withal.

Lastly, There is in the midst of these instructions an express caution given to Moses to take heed of varying from his model, ver. 40. *make them after the pattern shewed thee*. Nothing was left to his own invention, or the fancy of the workmen, or the peoples humour; but the will of God must be religiously observed in every particular. Thus, (1.) All God's providences are exactly according to his counsels, and the copy never varies from the original. Infinite wisdom never changeth its measures, whatever is purposed, shall undoubtedly be performed. (2.) All his ordinances must be administered according to his institutions. Christ's instruction to his disciples, Matt. 28. 20. is like this here, *Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*.

## C H A P. XXVI.

Moses here receives instructions, (1.) Concerning the inner curtains of the tent or tabernacle, and the coupling of those curtains, ver. 1—6. (2.) Concerning the outer curtains which were of goats hair, to strengthen the former, ver. 7—13. (3.) Concerning the case or cover which was to secure it from the weather, ver. 14. (4.) Concerning the boards which were to be reared up to support the curtains, with their bars and sockets, ver. 15—30. (5.) The partition between the holy place, and the most holy, ver. 31—35. (6.) The vail for the door, ver. 36, 37. These particulars thus largely recorded seem of little use to us now, yet having been of great use to Moses and Israel, and God having thought fit to preserve down to us the remembrance of them, we ought not to overlook them. Even the antiquity renders this account venerable.

1. **M**oreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. 2. The length of one curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits; and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. 3. The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another: and other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. 4. And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling: and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. 5. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain, that is in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. 6. And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches, and it shall be one tabernacle.

The house must be a tabernacle or tent, such as soldiers now use in the camp, which was both a mean dwelling, and a moveable one; and yet the ark of God had no better, till Solomon built the temple four hundred and eighty years after this, 1 Kings vi. 1. God manifested his presence among them thus in a tabernacle, (1.) In compliance with their present condition in the wilderness, that they might have him with them wherever they went. Note, God suits the tokens of his favour, and the gifts of his grace, to his peoples wants and necessities, according as they are, accommo-

dating his mercy to their state, prosperous or adverse, settled or unsettled. *When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee*, Isa. xlii. 2. (2.) That it might represent the state of God's church in this world, it is a *tabernacle-state*, Psal. xv. 1. *We have here no continuing city*, being strangers in this world, and travellers towards a better, we shall never be fixed till we come to heaven. Church privileges are moveable goods, from one place to another; the gospel is not tied to any place; the candlestick is in a tent, and may easily be *taken away*, Rev. ii. 5. If we make much of the tabernacle, and improve the privilege of it, wherever we go it will accompany us; but if we neglect and disgrace it, wherever we stay it will forsake us; *What hath my beloved to do in my house?* Jer. xi. 15.

Now, 1. The curtains of the tabernacle were to be very rich, the best of the kind, fine twined linen; and colours very pleasing, blue, and purple, and scarlet. 2. They were to be embroidered with cherubims, ver. 1. to intimate, that the angels of God pitch their tents round about the church, Psal. xxxiv. 7. As there were cherubims over the mercy-seat, so there were round the tabernacle; for we find the angels compassing not only the throne, but the elders; see Rev. v. 11. 3. There were to be two hangings, five breadths in each, sown together, and the two hangings coupled together with golden clasps, or tacks, so that it might be all one tabernacle, ver. 6. Thus the churches of Christ and the saints, though they are many, yet they are one, being *fitly joined together* in holy love, and by the *unity of the Spirit*, so growing into one *holy temple* in the Lord, Eph. ii. 21, 22. iv. 16. This tabernacle was very strait and narrow, but at the preaching of the gospel, the church is bid to *enlarge the place of her tent*, and to *stretch forth her curtains*, Isa. liv. 2.

7. And thou shalt make curtains of goats hair to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make. 8. The length of one curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains shall be all of one measure. 9. And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the fore-front of the tabernacle. 10. And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 11. And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be one. 12. And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half-curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back-side of the tabernacle. 13. And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side, and on that side, to cover it. 14. And thou shalt make a covering for the tent, of rams skins died red, and a covering above of badgers skins.

Moses is here ordered to make a double covering for the tabernacle, that it might not rain in, and that the beauty of those fine curtains might not be damaged.

1. There was to be a covering of hair camlet curtains, which were somewhat larger every way than the inner curtains, because they were to inclose them, and probably were stretched out at some little distance from them, ver. 7, &c. These were coupled together with brass clasps. The stuff being less valuable, the tacks were so; but the brass tacks would answer the intention as effectually as the golden ones. The bonds of unity may be as strong between curtains of goats hair, as between those of purple and scarlet.

2. Over this there was to be another covering, and that a double one, ver. 14. one of *rams skins died red*, probably dressed with the wool on; another of *badger skins*, so we translate it; but it should rather seem to have been some strong sort of leather (but very fine) for we read of the best sort of shoes made of it, Ezek. xvi. 10. Now observe here, 1. That the out-side of the tabernacle was coarse and rough, the beauty of it was in the inner curtains. Those in whom God dwells must labour to be better than they seem to be. Hypocrites put the best side outward, like *whited sepulchres*; but *the king's daughter is all glorious within*, Psal. xlv. 13. In the eye of the world, black as the tents of Kedar; but in the eye of God, comely as the curtains of Solomon, Gant. i. 5. Let our adorning be that of the hidden man of the heart, which God values, 1 Pet. iii. 4. 2. That where God placeth his glory, he will create a defence upon it, even upon the habitations of the righteous there *shall be a covert*; Isa. iv. 5, 6. The protection of providence shall always be upon the beauty of holiness. God's tent will be a *pavilion*, Psal. xxvii. 5.



15. And thou shalt make boards for the tabernacle, of shittim-wood, standing up. 16. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the breadth of one board. 17. Two tenons shall there be in one board, set in order one against another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 18. And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the south side, southward. 19. And thou shalt make forty sockets of silver, under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 20. And for the second side of the tabernacle on the north side, there shall be twenty boards. 21. And their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 22. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward; thou shalt make six boards. 23. And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 24. And they shall be coupled together beneath, and they shall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. 25. And they shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 26. And thou shalt make bars of shittim-wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 27. And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle for the two sides westward. 28. And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall reach from end to end. 29. And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. 30. And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof, which was shewed thee in the mount.

Very particular directions are here given about the boards of the tabernacle, which were to bear up the curtains, as the stakes of a tent, which had need to be strong, *Isa. liv. 2.* These boards had tenons which fell into the mortaises that were made for them in silver bases: God took care to have every thing strong as well as fine in his tabernacle. Curtains without boards would have been shaken by every wind; but *it is a good thing* to have the heart established with grace; that is as the boards to support the curtains of profession, which otherwise will not hold out long. The boards were coupled together with gold rings at top and bottom, *ver. 24.* and kept firm with bars that run through golden staples in every board, *ver. 26.* And the boards and bars were all richly gilded, *ver. 29.* Thus every thing in the tabernacle was very splendid, agreeable to that infant state of the church, when such things were proper enough to please children, and to possess the minds of the worshippers with a reverence of the divine glory, and to affect them with the greatness of that prince, who said, *Here will I dwell*; in allusion to this, the new Jerusalem is said to be of pure gold, *Rev. xxi. 18.* But the builders of the gospel church said, *Silver and gold have we none*, and yet the glory of their building far exceeded that of the tabernacle, *2 Cor. iii. 10, 11.* *How much better is wisdom than gold!* No orders are given here about the floor of the tabernacle, probably that also was boarded; for we cannot think that within all these fine curtains they trod upon the cold or wet ground; if it were so left, it may mind us of *Exodus xx. 24.* *An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me.*

31. And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made. 32. And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim-wood, overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver. 33. And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayst bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you, between the holy place, and the most holy. 34. And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony, in the most holy place. 35. And thou shalt set the table without the vail, and the candlestick over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side. 36. And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work. 37. And thou shalt make for the hanging, five pillars of shittim-wood,

and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

Two vails are here ordered to be made, (1.) One for a partition between the holy place and the most holy; which not only forbid any to enter, but forbid them so much as to look into the holiest of all, *ver. 31, 33.* Under that dispensation divine grace was veiled, but now we behold it with open face, *2 Cor. iii. 18.* The apostle tells us, *Heb. ix. 8.* what was the meaning of this vail; it intimated, that the ceremonial law could not make the comers thereunto perfect; nor would the observance of it bring men to heaven; the way into the holiest of all was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was standing; life and immortality lay concealed, till they were brought to light by the gospel; which was therefore signified by the rending of this vail at the death of Christ, *Matt. xxvii. 51.* We have now boldness to enter into the holiest, in all acts of devotion, by the blood of Jesus; yet such as obliges us to a holy reverence, and a humble sense of our distance. (2.) Another vail was for the outer door of the tabernacle, *ver. 36, 37.* Through this first vail the priests went in every day to minister in the holy place, but not the people, *Heb. ix. 6.* This vail was all the defence the tabernacle had against thieves and robbers, which might easily be broken through; for it could be neither locked nor barred; and the abundance of wealth in the tabernacle, one would think, might be a temptation; but by leaving it thus expos'd, (1.) The priests and Levites would be so much the more obliged to keep a strict watch upon it, and, (2.) God would shew his care of his church on earth, though it be weak and defenceless, and continually expos'd: A curtain shall be (if God please to make it so) as strong a defence to his house, as gates of brass, and bars of iron.

## C H A P. XXVII.

In this chapter directions are given, 1. Concerning the brasen altar for burnt-offerings, *ver. 1—8.* 2. Concerning the court of the tabernacle, with the hangings of it, *ver. 9—19.* 3. Concerning oil for the lamp, *ver. 20, 21.*

1. **A**ND thou shalt make an altar of shittim-wood five cubits long, and five cubits broad: the altar shall be four-square, and the height thereof shall be three cubits. 2. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass. 3. And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his flesh-hooks, and his fire-pans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. 4. And thou shalt make for it a grate of net-work of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brasen rings in the four corners thereof. 5. And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. 6. And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with brass. 7. And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar to bear it. 8. Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was shewed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

As God intended in the tabernacle to manifest his presence among his people, so there they were to pay their devotions to him, not in the tabernacle it self, into that only the priests entered as God's domestick servants; but in the court before the tabernacle, where, as common subjects, they attended: There an altar was ordered to be set up, to which they must bring their sacrifices, and on which their priests must offer them to God; and this altar was to sanctify their gifts; from hence they were to present their services to God, as from the mercy-seat he gave his oracles to them; and thus a communion was settled between God and Israel. Moses is here directed about the dimensions of it; it was four-square, *ver. 1.* The horns of it, *ver. 2.* which were for ornament, and for use, the sacrifices were bound to the horns of the altar, and to them malefactors fled for refuge; the materials, it was of wood overlaid with brass, *ver. 1, 2.* the appurtenances of it, *ver. 3.* which were all of brass; the grate, which was let into the hollow of the altar, about the middle of it, in which the fire was kept, and the sacrifice burnt; it was made of net-work like a sieve, and hung hollow, that the fire might burn the better, and that the ashes might fall through into the hollow of the altar, *ver. 4, 5.* Also concerning the staves with which it must be carried, *ver. 6, 7.* and lastly he is referred to the pattern shewed him, *ver. 9.*

Now this brasen altar was a type of Christ dying to make atonement for our sins: the wood had been consumed by the fire from heaven, if it had not been secured by the brass; nor could the human nature of Christ have born the wrath of God, if it had not



not been supported by a divine power : Christ sanctified himself for his church, at their altar, *John xvii. 19.* and by his mediation sanctifies the daily services of his people, who also have a right to eat of this altar, *Heb. xiii. 10.* for they serve at it as spiritual priests. To the horns of this altar poor sinners fly for refuge when justice pursues them, and there they are safe in the virtue of the sacrifice there offered.

9. And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle for the south side, southward : there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long, for one side. 10. And the twenty pillars thereof, and their twenty sockets shall be of brass : the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets shall be of silver. 11. And likewise for the north side in length, there shall be hangings of an hundred cubits long, and his twenty pillars, and their twenty sockets of brass : the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets of silver. 12. And for the breadth of the court, on the west side, shall be hangings of fifty cubits : their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. 13. And the breadth of the court on the east side, eastward, shall be fifty cubits. 14. The hangings of one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits ; their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15. And on the other side shall be hangings, fifteen cubits : their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16. And for the gate of the court, shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work : and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. 17. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver : their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass. 18. The length of the court shall be an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. 19. All the vessels of the tabernacle in all the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court shall be of brass.

Before the tabernacle there was to be a court or yard, inclosed with hangings of the finest linen that was used for tents : This court, according to the common computation of cubits, was fifty yards long, and twenty-five broad. Pillars were set up at convenient distances, in sockets of brass, the pillars filleted with silver, and silver tenter-hooks in them, on which the linen hangings were fastened : the hanging which served for the gate was finer than the rest, *ver. 16.* This court was a type of the church, inclosed and distinguished from the rest of the world. The inclosure supported by pillars, noting the stability of the church, hung with the clean linen, which is said to be the *righteousness of saints*, *Rev. xix. 8.* These were the courts David longed for, and coveted to reside in, *Psal. lxxxiv. 2, 10.* and into which the people of God entered with praise and thanksgiving, *Psal. c. 4.* yet this court would contain but a few worshippers ; thanks be to God now under the gospel the inclosure is taken down ; God's will is, that men *pray every where* ; and there is room for all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ.

20. And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring the pure oil-olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always. 21. In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD : it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations, on the behalf of the children of Israel.

We read of the candlestick in the twenty-fifth chapter ; here is order given for the keeping of the lamps constantly burning in it, else it was useless ; in every candlestick there should be a burning and shining light ; candlesticks without candles, are as *wells without water*, or as *clouds without rain*. Now, (1.) The people were to provide the oil ; from them the Lord's ministers must have their maintenance. Or rather the pure oil signified the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which are communicated to all believers from Christ the good olive, *of whose fulness we receive*, *Zech. iv. 11, 12.* and without which our light cannot shine before men. (2.) The priests were to light the lamps, and to tend them ; it was part of their daily service to *cause the lamps to burn always*, night and day ; thus it is the work of ministers by the preaching and expounding of the scriptures, which are as a lamp to enlighten the church, God's tabernacle upon earth, and to direct the spiritual priests in his service. This is to be a *statute for ever*, that the lamps of the word be lighted, as duly as the incense of prayer and praise is offered.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Orders being given for the fitting up of the place of worship, in this, and the following chapter, care is taken about the priests that were to minister in this holy place, as the menial servants of the God of Israel. He hired servants, as a token of his purpose to reside among them. In this chapter, (1.) He pitcheth upon the persons who should be his servants, *ver. 1.* (2.) He appoints their livery ; their work was holy, and so must their garments be ; and answerable to the glory of the house which was now to be erected, *ver. 2—5.* 1. He appoints the garments of his head-servant, the high priest, which were very rich. (1.) An ephod and girdle, *ver. 6—14.* (2.) A breast-plate of judgment, *ver. 15—29.* in which must be put the Urim and Thummim, *ver. 30.* (3.) The robe of the ephod, *ver. 31—35.* (4.) The mitre, *ver. 36—39.* 2. The garments of the inferior priests, *ver. 40—43.* And these also were shadows of good things to come.

1. **A**ND take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priests office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aarons sons. 2. And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty. 3. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aarons garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priests office. 4. And these are the garments which they shall make ; a breast-plate, an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle : and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priests office. 5. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.

Here is, 1. The priests nominated, *Aaron and his sons*, *ver. 1.* Hitherto every master of a family was priest to his own family, and offered as they saw cause upon altars of earth ; but now the families of Israel began to be incorporated into a nation, and a tabernacle of the congregation was to be erected, as a visible centre of their unity, it was requisite there should be a publick priesthood instituted. Moses, who had hitherto officiated, and is therefore reckoned among the *priests of the Lord*, *Psal. xcix. 6.* had enough to do as their prophet, to consult the oracle for them ; and as their prince to judge among them ; nor was he desirous to engross all the honours to himself, or to entail that of the priesthood, which alone was hereditary, upon his own family, but was very well pleased to see his brother Aaron invested in this office ; and his sons after him, while (how great soever he was) his sons after him would be but common Levites : It is an instance of the humility of that great man, and an evidence of his sincere regard of the glory of God, that he had so little regard to the preferment of his own family. Aaron that had humbly served as a prophet to his younger brother Moses, and did not decline the office, *chap. vii. 1.* is now advanced to be a priest, a high priest to God ; for he will exalt those that abase themselves. Nor could any man have taken this honour to himself, but he that was called of God to it, *Heb. v. 4.* God had said of Israel in general, that they should be to him a *kingdom of priests*, *chap. xix. 6.* But because it was requisite that those who ministered at the altar should give themselves wholly to his service, and because that which is every body's work, will soon come to be nobody's work, God here chose from among them one to be a family of priests ; the father and his four sons, and from Aaron's loins descended all the priests of the Jewish church, whom we read so often of both in the Old Testament and in the New : And a blessed thing it is, when real holiness goes as this ceremonial holiness did by succession in a family.

2. The priest's garments, appointed for glory and beauty, *ver. 2.* some of the richest materials were to be provided, *ver. 5.* and the best artists employed in the making of them, whose skill God by a special gift for this purpose, would improve to a very high degree, *ver. 3.* Note, Eminency even in common arts is a gift of God, it comes from him, and as there is occasion it ought to be us'd for him. He that teacheth the husbandman discretion, teacheth the tradesman also : both therefore ought to honour God with their gain. Human learning ought particularly to be consecrated to the service of the priesthood, and employed for the adorning of those that minister about holy things.

The garments appointed were, (1.) Four, which both the high priest and the inferior priests wore, *viz.* the linen breeches, the linen coat, and the linen girdle which fastened it to them, and the bonnet or turban ; that which the high priest wore is called a mitre. (2.) Four more which were peculiar to the high priest, *viz.* The ephod, with the curious girdle of it, the breast-plate of



judgment, the long robe with the bells and pomegranats at the bottom of it, and the golden plate on his forehead. These glorious garments were appointed, 1. That the priests themselves might be minded of the dignity of their office, and might behave themselves with a due decorum. 2. That the people might thereby be possessed with a holy reverence of that God, whose ministers appeared in such grandeur. 3. That the priests might be types of Christ, who should offer himself without spot to God, and of all christians who have the beauty of holiness put upon them, in which they are consecrated to God. Our adorning now under the gospel, both that of ministers and christians, is not to be of gold and pearl, and costly array, but the *garments of salvation, and the robe of righteousness*, Isa. lxi. 10. Psal. cxxxii. 9, 16. As the filthy garments wherewith Joshua the high priest was clothed, signified the iniquity which cleaved to his priesthood, from which care was taken that it should be purged, Zec. iii. 3, 4. so those *holy garments* signified the perfect purity that there is in the priesthood of Christ, he is holy, harmless, and undefiled.

6. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet and fine twined linen, with cunning work. 7. It shall have the two shoulder pieces thereof joined at the two ends thereof; and so it shall be joined together. 8. And the curious girdle of the ephod which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9. And thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: 10. Six of their names on one stone, and the other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth. 11. With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones, with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold. 12. And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD, upon his two shoulders for a memorial. 13. And thou shalt make ouches of gold; 14. And two chains of pure gold at the ends: of wreathen work shalt thou make them, and fasten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

Directions are here given concerning the ephod, which was the outmost garment of the high priest; linen ephods were worn by the inferior priests, 1 Sam. xxii. 18. Samuel wore one when he was a child, 1 Sam. ii. 18. and David when he danced before the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 14. but this which the high priest only wore was called a golden ephod, because there was a great deal of gold woven into it: it was a short coat without sleeves, buttoned close to him with a curious girdle of the same stuff, ver. 6, 7, 8. the shoulder pieces were buttoned together with two precious stones set in gold, one on each shoulder, on which were graven the names of the *children of Israel*, ver. 10, 11, 12. In allusion to this, 1. Christ our high priest appeared to John *girt about the paps with a golden girdle*, such as was the curious girdle of the ephod, Rev. i. 13. Righteousness is the girdle of his loins, Isa. xi. 5. and should be of ours, Eph. vi. 14. He is girt with strength for the work of our salvation, and is ready to it. 2. The government is said to be *upon his shoulders*, Isa. ix. 6. as Aaron had the names of all Israel upon his shoulders in precious stones. He represents to himself and to his Father, a *glorious church*, Eph. v. 27. He hath power to support them, interest to recommend them, and it is in him that they are remembered with honour and favour: he bears them before the Lord *for a memorial*, ver. 12. in token of his *appearing before God*, as the representative of all Israel, and an advocate for them.

15. And thou shalt make the breast-plate of judgment, with cunning work after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen shalt thou make it. 16. Four-square it shall be, being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. 17. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. 18. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 19. And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 20. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings. 21. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names: like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name shall they be, according to the

twelve tribes. 22. And thou shalt make upon the breast-plate chains at the ends, of wreathen work, of pure gold. 23. And thou shalt make upon the breast-plate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breast-plate. 24. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breast-plate. 25. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains, thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod before it. 26. And thou shalt make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breast-plate, in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. 27. And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod, underneath towards the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 28. And they shall bind the breast-plate by the rings thereof, unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breast-plate be not loosed from the ephod. 29. And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. 30. And thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aarons heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart, before the LORD continually.

The most considerable of the ornaments of the high priest was this breast-plate, a rich piece of cloth, curiously wrought with gold and purple, &c. two spans long, and a span broad, so that being doubled it was a span square, ver. 16. This was fastened to the ephod with wreathen chains of gold, (ver. 13, 14. and ver. 22, &c.) both at top and bottom, so that *the breast-plate might not be loosed from the ephod*, ver. 28. The ephod was the garment of service, the breast-plate of judgment was an emblem of honour, these two must by no means be separated. If any man will *minister unto the Lord, and do his will*, he shall *know his doctrine*. In this breast-plate, 1. The tribes of Israel were recommended to God's favour in twelve precious stones, ver. 17—21. and ver. 29. Some question whether Levi had a precious stone with his name on or no; if not, Ephraim and Manasseh were reckoned distinct, as Jacob had said they should be, and the high priest himself being head of the tribe of Levi, sufficiently represented that tribe. If there was a stone for Levi, as is intimated by that, that they were *engraved according to their birth*, ver. 10. Ephraim and Manasseh were one in Joseph; Aaron was to bear their names for a *memorial before the Lord continually*, being *ordained for men*, to represent them in things pertaining to God, herein typifying our great high priest, who always appears in the presence of God for us. (1.) Though the people were forbidden to come near, and obliged to keep their distance, yet by the high priest, who had their names on his breast-plate, they entered into the holiest; so believers, even while they are here on this earth, not only *enter into the holiest*, but by faith are made to *sit with Christ in heavenly places*, Eph. ii. 6. (2.) The name of each tribe was engraven in a *precious stone*, to signify how *precious in God's sight* believers are, and how *honourable*, Isa. xliii. 4. They shall be his in the day he *makes up his jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. How small and poor soever the tribe was, it was a *precious stone* in the breast-plate of the high priest; thus are all the saints dear to Christ; and his delight is in them as the excellent ones of the earth, however men esteem them as *earthen pitchers*, Lam. iv. 2. (3.) The high priest had the names of the tribes both on his shoulders and on his breast, noting both the power and the love, with which our Lord Jesus intercedes for those that are his. He not only bears them up in his arms with an almighty strength, but he bears them *upon his heart*, as the expression here is, ver. 29. *carries them in his bosom*, Isa. xl. 11. with the most tender affection. How near should Christ's name be to our hearts, since he is pleased to lay our names so near his: And what a comfort is it to us in all our addresses to God, that the great high priest of our profession has the names of all his Israel upon his breast before the Lord *for a memorial*, presenting them to God, as the people of his choice, who were to be made *accepted in the beloved*! Let not any good christians fear that God hath forgotten them, nor question his being mindful of them upon all occasions, when they are not only graven upon the *palms of his hands*, Isa. xlix. 16. but graven upon the heart of the great intercessor: See *Cant. viii. 6*. 2. The Urim and Thummim, by which the will of God was made known in doubtful cases, was put in this breast-plate, which is therefore called the breast-plate of judgment, ver. 30. Urim and Thummim signifies light and integrity; many conjectures there are among the learned what they were; we have no reason to think they were any thing that Moses was to make, more than what was before ordered; so that either God made them himself, and



and gave them to Moses, for him to put into the breast-plate, when other things were prepared, *Lev. viii. 8.* Or, no more is meant but a declaration of the further use of what was already ordered to be made: I think the words may be read thus, *And thou shalt give, or add, or deliver to the breast-plate of judgment, the illuminations and perfections, and they shall be upon the heart of Aaron,* i. e. he shall be endued with a power of knowing and making known the mind of God in all difficult doubtful cases, relating either to the civil or ecclesiastical state of that nation. Their government was a theocracy; God was their king, the high priest was under God their ruler, this Urim and Thummim were his cabinet counsel; probably Moses wrote upon the breast-plate, or wove into it these words, *Urim and Thummim*, to signify that the high priest having on him this breast-plate, and asking counsel of God in any emergency relating to the publick, he should be directed to take those measures, and give that advice which God would own. If he were standing before the ark (but without the veil) probably he received instructions from off the mercy-seat, as Moses did, *chap. xxv. 22.* thus it should seem Phineas did, *Jud. xx. 27.* If he were at a distance from the ark, as Abiathar was when he enquired of the Lord for David, *1 Sam. xxiii. 6.* then the answer was given either by a voice from heaven, or rather by an impulse upon the mind of the high priest, which last is perhaps intimated in that expression, he shall *bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart.* This oracle was of great use to Israel, Joshua consulted it, *Num. xxvii. 21.* and it is likely the judges after him. It was lost in the captivity, and never retrieved after, though it should seem it was expected, *Ezra ii. 63.* But it was a shadow of good things to come, and the substance is Christ. He is our oracle; by him God in these last days makes known himself and his mind to us, *Heb. i. 1. Joh. i. 18.* Divine revelation centers in him, and comes to us through him; he is the light, the true light, the faithful witness, the truth it self, and from him we receive the Spirit of truth, who leads into all truth. The joining of the breast-plate to the ephod, notes that his prophetic office was founded in his priesthood; and it was by the merit of his death that he purchased this honour for himself, and this favour for us. It was the *Lamb that had been slain*, that was worthy to *take the book, and to open the seals*, *Rev. v. 9.*

31. And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32. And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work, round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent. 33. And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof, and bells of gold between them round about. 34. A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. 35. And it shall be upon Aaron, to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out; that he die not. 36. And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre: upon the fore-front of the mitre it shall be. 38. And it shall be upon Aarons forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. 39. And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needle-work.

Here is, 1. Direction given concerning *the robe of the ephod*, ver. 31—35. This was next under the ephod, and reached down to the knees, without sleeves, and was put on over their head, having holes on the sides to put the arms through, or as Maimonides describes it, was not sown together on the sides at all. The hole on the top through which the head was put was carefully bound about, that it might not tear in the putting on. In religious worship care must be taken to prevent every thing that may distract the minds of the worshippers, or render the service despicable. Round the skirts of the robe were hung golden bells, and the representations of pomegranats made of yarn of divers colours. The pomegranats added to the beauty of the robe, and the sound of the bells gave notice to the people in the outer court, when he went in to the holy place to burn incense, that they might then apply themselves to their devotions at the same time, *Luke i. 10.* in token of their concurrence with him in his offering, and their hopes of the ascent of their prayers to God in the virtue of the incense he offered. Aaron must come near to minister in the garments that were appointed him, *that he die not.* It is at his peril if he attend otherwise than according to the institution. This intimates that we must serve the Lord *with fear*

and holy trembling, as those that know we deserve to die, and are in danger of making some fatal mistake. Some make the bells of the holy robe to typify the sound of the gospel of Christ in the world, giving notice of his entrance within the veil for us; *Blessed are they that hear this joyful sound*, *Psal. lxxxix. 15.* The joining of the pomegranats, which are a fragrant fruit, notes the sweet savour of the gospel, as well as the joyful sound of it, for it is a savour of *life unto life.* The church is called an *orchard of pomegranats.*

2. Concerning the golden plate fixed upon Aaron's forehead, on which must be engraven *Holiness to the Lord*, ver. 36, 37. or the *Holiness of Jehovah.* Aaron must hereby be minded, that God is holy, and that his priests must be holy, *holiness becomes his house and household.* The high priest must be sequestered from all pollution, and consecrated to God, and to his service and honour, and so must all his ministrations be. All that attend in God's house, must have *Holiness to the Lord* engraven upon their foreheads, i. e. they must be holy, devoted to the Lord, and designing his glory in all they do. This must appear in their forehead, in an open profession of their relation to God, as those that are not ashamed to own it, and in a conversation in the world answerable to it. It must likewise be engraven like the engravings of a signet, so deep, so durable, not painted to be washed off, but sincere and lasting, such must our *holiness to the Lord* be. Aaron must have this upon his forehead, that he may *bear the iniquity of the holy things*, ver. 38. and that *they may be accepted before the Lord.* Herein he was a type of Christ, the great mediator between God and man, through whom it is that we have to do with God. (1.) Through him what is amiss in our services is pardoned. The divine law is strict; in many things we come short of our duty, so that we cannot but be conscious to our selves of much iniquity, cleaving even to our holy things: when we would do good, evil is present; even this would be our ruin, if God should enter into judgment with us: But Christ our high priest bears this iniquity, bears it for us, so as to bear it from us, and through him it is forgiven to us, and not laid to our charge. (2.) Through him what is good is accepted, our persons, our performances are pleasing to God upon the account of Christ's intercession, and not otherwise, *1 Pet. ii. 5.* His being *Holiness to the Lord*, recommends all those to the divine favour that are interested in his righteousness, and clothed with his Spirit. And therefore he hath said, it was for our sakes that he *sanctified himself*, *Joh. xvii. 19.* Having *such a high priest*, we come *boldly to the throne of grace*, *Heb. iv. 14, 16.*

3. The rest of the garments are but named, ver. 39. because there was nothing extraordinary in them. The embroidered coat of fine linen was the innermost of the priestly garments, it reached to the feet, and the sleeves to the wrists, and was bound to the body with a girdle or sash of needle-work. The mitre or diadem was of linen, such as kings anciently wore in the East, typifying the kingly office of Christ. He is a *priest upon a throne*, *Zech. vi. 13.* a priest with a crown. These two God has joined, and we must not think to separate them.

40. And for Aarons sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty. 41. And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him: and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priests office. 42. And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness: from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach. 43. And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy place; that they bear not iniquity, and die. It shall be a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him.

Here is, 1. Particular orders about the vestments of the inferior priests. They were to have coats, and girdles, and bonnets, of the same materials of those of the high priest, but there was difference in shape between their bonnets, and his mitre. Theirs, as his, were to be *for glory and beauty*, ver. 40. that they might look great in their ministration: yet all this glory was nothing, compared with the glory of grace, this beauty nothing to the beauty of holiness, of which these holy garments were typical. They are particularly ordered in their ministration to wear *linen breeches*, ver. 42. This teacheth us modesty, and decency of garb and gesture, at all times, especially in publick worship; in which a veil is becoming, *1 Cor. xi. 10.* It also intimates what need our souls have of a covering when we come before God, that the *shame of their nakedness may not appear.* 2. A general rule concerning the garments, both of the high priest, and of the inferior priests, that they were to be put upon them at first, when they were consecrated, in token of their being invested in the office, ver. 41. and then they were to wear them in all their ministrations (but not at other times) ver. 43. and this at their peril,



peril, lest they *bear iniquity, and die*. Omissions in duty, as well as omissions of duty, are sins, which they that are guilty of shall *bear their iniquity*. If the priests perform the instituted service, and do not do it in the appointed garments, it is (say the Jewish doctors) as if a stranger did it, and the *stranger that comes nigh shall be put to death*. Nor will God connive at the presumptions and irreverences even of those whom he causeth to draw most near to him; if Aaron himself put a slight upon the divine institution, he shall bear iniquity and die. To us these garments typify, (1.) *The righteousness of Christ*; if we appear not before God in that, we shall *bear iniquity and die*. What have we to do at the wedding-feast, without a *wedding-garment*; or at God's altar without the array of his priests, *Matt. xxii. 12, 13.* (2.) *The armour of God*, prescribed, *Eph. vi. 13.* If we venture without that armour, our spiritual enemies will be the death of our souls, and *we shall bear the iniquity, our blood will be upon our own heads*. Blessed is he therefore that watcheth and keepeth his garments, *Rev. xvi. 15.* Lastly, This is said to be a *statute for ever*, i. e. it is to continue as long as the priesthood continues. But it is to have its perpetuity in the substance, of which these things were the shadows.

## C H A P. XXIX.

*Particular orders are given in this chapter, 1. Concerning the consecration of the priests, and the sanctification of the altar, ver. 1—37. 2. Concerning the daily sacrifice, ver. 38—41. To which gracious promises are annexed, that God would own and bless them in all their services, ver. 42—46.*

1. **A**ND this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them, to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priests' office: take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, 2. And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. 3. And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. 4. And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water. 5. And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breast-plate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod. 6. And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. 7. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him. 8. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them. 9. And thou shalt gird them with girdles (Aaron and his sons) and put the bonnets on them: and the priests' office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons. 10. And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation; and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. 11. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 12. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. 13. And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul that is above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar. 14. But the flesh of the bullock, and his skin, and his dung shalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it is a sin-offering. 15. Thou shalt also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 16. And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood, and sprinkle it round about upon the altar. 17. And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. 18. And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it is a burnt-offering unto the LORD: it is a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 19. And thou shalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the ram. 20. Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. 21. And thou shalt take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and

sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons garments with him. 22. Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration: 23. And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread, that is before the LORD. 24. And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt wave them for a wave-offering before the LORD. 25. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 26. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aarons consecrations, and wave it for a wave-offering before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. 27. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave-offering, and the shoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons. 28. And it shall be Aarons and his sons by a statute for ever, from the children of Israel: for it is an heave-offering: and it shall be an heave-offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace-offerings, even their heave-offering unto the LORD. 29. And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them. 30. And that son that is priest in his stead shall put them on seven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to minister in the holy place. 31. And thou shalt take the ram of the consecration, and seethe his flesh in the holy place. 32. And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 33. And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. 34. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread remain unto the morning; then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire: it shall not be eaten, because it is holy. 35. And thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all things which I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them. 36. And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it. 37. Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it: and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

Here is, 1. The law concerning the confirmation of Aaron, and his sons, to the priests' office, which was to be done with a great deal of ceremony and solemnity, that they themselves might be duly affected with the greatness of the work to which they were called, and that the people also might learn to magnify the office, and none might dare to invade it. The ceremonies wherewith it was to be done were very fully and particularly appointed, because nothing of this kind had been done before, and because it was to be a statute for ever, that the high priest should be thus inaugurated. Now, (1.) The work to be done, was the consecrating of the persons whom God had chosen to be priests. By which they devoted and gave up themselves to the service of God, and God declares his acceptance of them; and the people were made to know that they *glorified not themselves* to be made priests, but were *called of God*, *Heb. v. 4, 5.* They were thus distinguished from common men, sequestered from common services, and set apart for God, and an immediate attendance on him. Note, All that are to be employed for God, are to be sanctified to him. The person must first be accepted, and then the performance. The Hebrew phrase for consecrating, is *filling the hand*, ver. 9. *thou shalt fill the hand of Aaron and his sons*, and the *ram of consecration* is the *ram of fillings*, ver. 22, 26. The consecrating of them was the perfecting of them; Christ is said to be perfected or consecrated for evermore, *Heb. vii. 28.* Probably the phrase here, is borrowed from the putting of the sacrifice into their hand, to be waved before the Lord, ver. 24. But it intimates, 1. That ministers have their hands full, they have no time to trifle, so great, so copious, so constant is their work. 2. That they must have their hands filled. Of necessity they must have something to offer, and they cannot find it



it in themselves, it must be given them from above. They cannot fill the people's hearts, unless God fill their hands; to him therefore they must go, and *receive from his fulness*. (2.) The person to do it was Moses, by God's appointment. Though he was *ordained for men*, yet the people were not to consecrate him; Moses the *servant of the Lord*, and his agent herein, must do it. By God's special appointment he now did the priest's work, and therefore that which was the priest's part of the sacrifice was here ordered to be his; *ver. 26*. (3.) The place was at the *door of the tabernacle of meeting*, *ver. 4*. God was pleased to dwell in the tabernacle, the people attending in the courts, so that the door between the court and the tabernacle, was the fittest place for them to be consecrated in, who were to mediate between God and man, and so to stand between both, and *lay their hands* (as it were) *upon both*. They were consecrated at the door, for they were to be door-keepers. (4.) It was done with many ceremonies.

1. They were to be washed, *ver. 4*. signifying that they must be clean who *bear the vessels of the Lord*, *Isa. lii. 11*. They that would *perfect holiness*, must *cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit*, *2 Cor. vii. 1*. *Isa. i. 16, 17, 18*. They were now washed all over; but afterwards, when they went in to minister, they washed only their hands and feet, *chap. xxx. 19*. for *he that is washed needs no more*, *John xiii. 10*.

2. They were to be clothed with the holy garments, *ver. 5, 6, 8, 9*. to signify that it was not sufficient for them to put away the pollutions of sin, but they must put on the graces of the Spirit, be *clothed with righteousness*, *Psal. cxxxii. 10*. They must be girded, as men prepared and strengthened for their work; and they must be robed and crowned, as men that counted their work and office their true honour.

3. The high priest was to be anointed with the *holy anointing oil*, *ver. 7*. that the church might be filled and delighted with the sweet favour of his administrations, for *ointment and perfume rejoice the heart*; and in token of the pouring out of the Spirit upon him, to qualify him for his work. Brotherly love is compared to this oil with which Aaron was anointed, *Psal. cxxxiii. 2*. The inferior priests are said to be anointed, *chap. xxx. 30*. not on their heads, as the high priest, (*Lev. xxi. 10*.) only the oil was mingled with the blood that was sprinkled upon their garments.

4. Sacrifices were to be offered for them. The covenant of priesthood, as all other covenants, must be *made by sacrifice*.

1. There must be a sin-offering, to make atonement for them, *ver. 10—14*. The law made them priests that had infirmity, and therefore, they must first offer for their own sin, before they could make atonement *for the people*, *Heb. vii. 27, 28*. They were to put their hand on the head of their sacrifice, *ver. 10*. confessing that they deserved to die for their own sin, and desiring that the killing of the beast might expiate their guilt, and be accepted as a vicarious satisfaction. It was used as other sin-offerings were; only, whereas the flesh of other sin-offerings was eaten by the priests, *Lev. x. 18*. in token of the priests taking away the sin of the people, this was appointed to be all burnt without the camp, *ver. 14*. to signify the imperfection of the legal dispensation, (as the learned bishop Patrick notes) for the sins of the priests themselves could not be taken away by those sacrifices, but they must expect a better high priest, and a better sacrifice.

2. There must be a burnt-offering, a ram wholly burnt, to the honour of God, in token of the dedication of themselves wholly to God, and to his service, as *living sacrifices*, kindled with the fire, and ascending in the flame of holy love, *ver. 15—18*. The sin-offering must first be offered, and then the burnt-offering; for till guilt be removed, no acceptable service can be performed, *Isa. vi. 7*.

3. There must be a peace-offering, it is called the ram of consecration, because there was more in this, peculiar to the occasion, than in the other two. In the burnt-offering God had the glory of their priesthood, in this they had the comfort of it, and in token of a mutual covenant between God and them. (1.) The blood of this sacrifice was divided between God and them, *ver. 20, 21*. part of the blood was *sprinkled upon the altar round about*, and part put upon them, upon their bodies, *ver. 20*. and upon their garments, *ver. 21*. Thus the benefit of the expiation made by the sacrifice, was applied and assured to them, and their whole selves from head to foot sanctified to the service of God. The blood was put upon the most extreme parts of the body, to signify, that it was all as it were inclosed, and taken in for God, the tip of the ear, and the great toe, not excepted. And the blood and oil sprinkled upon garments, we reckon spot and stain them, yet the holy oil, and the blood of the sacrifice, sprinkled upon their garments, must be looked upon as the greatest adorning imaginable to them, for they signified the blood of Christ, and the graces of the Spirit, which constitute and compleat the beauty of holiness, and recommend us to God; we read of robes *made white with the blood of the lamb*. (2.) The *flesh of the sacrifice*, with the meat-offering annexed to it, was likewise divided between God and them, that (to speak with reverence) God and they might feast together, in token of friendship and fellowship.

1. Part of it was to be first waved before the Lord, and then burnt upon the altar; part of the flesh, *ver. 22*. part of the bread, (for bread and flesh must go together) *ver. 23*. these were first put

into the hands of Aaron to be waved to and fro, in token of their being offered to God, who though unseen yet compasseth us round on every side, and then they were to be burnt upon the altar, *ver. 24, 25*. for the altar was to devour God's part of the sacrifice. Thus God admitted Aaron and his sons to be his servants, and wait at his table, taking the meat of his altar from their hands. Here, in a parenthesis as it were, comes in the law concerning the priests' part of the peace-offerings afterwards, the breast and shoulder, which were now divided; Moses had the breast, and the shoulder was burnt on the altar with God's part, *ver. 26, 27, 28*.

2. The other part both of the flesh of the ram, and of the bread, Aaron and his sons were to eat at the door of the tabernacle, *ver. 31, 32, 33*. to signify that he not only called them servants, but friends, *Joh. xv. 15*. He *supped with them*, and *they with him*. Their eating of the things wherewith the atonement was made, signified their *receiving the atonement*, as the expression is, *Rom. v. 11*. their thankful acceptance of the benefit of it, and their joyful communion with God thereupon, which was the true intent and meaning of a feast, upon a sacrifice. If any of it were left, it must be burnt, that it might not be in any danger of putrifying, and to shew that it was an extraordinary peace-offering.

Lastly, The time that was to be spent in this consecration, *seven days shalt thou consecrate them*; *ver. 35*. Though all the ceremonies were performed on the first day, yet, 1. They were not to look upon their consecration as compleated, till the seven days end, which put a solemnity upon their admission, and a distance between this and their former state, and obliged them to enter upon their work with a pause, giving them time to consider the weight and seriousness of it. This was to be observed in after ages, *ver. 30*. He that was to succeed Aaron in the high priesthood, must put on the holy garments seven days together, in token of a deliberate and gradual advance into his office, and that one sabbath might pass over him, in his consecration. 2. Every day of the seven, in this first consecration, a bullock was to be offered for a sin-offering, *ver. 36*. which was to intimate to them, (1.) That it was of very great concern to them to get their sins pardoned, and that though atonement was made, and they had had the comfort of it, yet they must still keep up a penitent sense of sin, and oft repeat the confession of it. (2.) That those sacrifices which were thus offered day by day to make atonement, could not make the *coners thereunto perfect*, for then they would have ceased to be offered, as the apostle argues, *Heb. x. 1, 2*. They must therefore expect the *bringing in of a better hope*.

Now this consecration of the priests was a *shadow of good things to come*. (1.) Our Lord Jesus is the great high priest of our profession, called of God to be so consecrated for evermore, anointed with the Spirit above his fellows, whence he is called Messiah, the Christ; clothed with the holy garments, even with glory and beauty; sanctified by his own blood, not that of bullocks and rams, *Heb. ix. 12*. *made perfect*, or consecrated, *through sufferings*, *Heb. ii. 10*. Thus in him this was a perpetual statute, *ver. 9*. (2.) All believers are spiritual priests, to offer spiritual sacrifices, *1 Pet. ii. 5*. washed in the blood of Christ, and so *made to our God priests*, *Rev. i. 5, 6*. They also are clothed with the beauty of holiness, and have received the anointing, *1 John ii. 27*. Their hands are filled with work, which they must continually attend to; and it is through Christ the great sacrifice, that they are dedicated to this service. His blood *sprinkled upon the conscience*, *purgeth it from dead works*, that they may as priests *serve the living God*. The Spirit of God (as Ainsworth notes) is called the *finger of God* (*Luk. xi. 20*. compared with *Matt. xii. 28*.) and by him the merit of Christ is effectually applied to our souls, as here Moses with his finger was to put the blood upon Aaron. It is likewise intimated that gospel ministers are to be solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry with great deliberation and seriousness, both in the ordainers; and in the ordained, as those that are to be employed in a great work, and intrusted with a great charge.

2. The consecration of the altar, which seems to have been coincident with that of the priests, and the sin-offerings which were offered every day for seven days together, had reference to the altar, as well as the priests, *ver. 36, 37*. An atonement was made for the altar. Though that was not a subject capable of sin, nor having never yet been used, could it be said to be polluted with the sins of the people, yet since the fall there can be no sanctification to God, but there must first be an atonement for sin, which renders us both unworthy and unfit to be employed for God. The altar was also sanctified, not only set apart it self to a sacred use, but made so holy as to *sanctify the gifts* that were offered upon it, *Matt. xxiii. 19*. Christ is our altar, for our sakes he sanctified himself, that we and our performances might be sanctified and recommended to God, *John xvii. 19*.

38. Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even. 40. And with the one lamb a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil: and the fourth part



of an hin of wine for a drink-offering. 41. And the other lamb thou shalt offer at even, and shalt do thereunto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 42. This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. 43. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. 44. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priests office. 45. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. 46. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them: I am the LORD their God.

Here is, 1. The daily service appointed, a lamb was to be offered upon the altar every morning, and a lamb every evening, each with a meat-offering, both made by fire, as a *continual burnt-offering throughout their generations*, ver. 38—41. Whether there were any other sacrifices to be offered or no, these were sure to be offered, at the publick charge, and for the benefit and comfort of all Israel, to make atonement for their daily sins, and an acknowledgment to God of their daily mercies. This was that which *the duty of every day required*. The taking away of this daily sacrifice by Antiochus, for so many evenings and mornings, was that great calamity of the church which was foretold, *Dan. viii. 11*. Now, 1. This typified the continual intercession which Christ ever lives to make, in the virtue of his satisfaction, for the continual sanctification of his church: though he offered himself *once for all*, yet that one offering thus becomes a continual offering. 2. This teacheth us to offer up to God the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise every day, morning and evening, in humble acknowledgment of our dependance upon him, and our obligations to him. Our daily devotions must be looked upon as the most needful of our daily works, and the most pleasant of our daily comforts; whatever business we have, this must never be omitted, either morning or evening; prayer-time must be kept up as duly as meat-time: the daily sacrifices were as the daily meals in God's house, and therefore they were always attended with bread and wine; those starve their own souls, that keep not up a constant attendance on the throne of grace.

2. Great and precious promises made of God's favour to Israel, and the tokens of his special presence with them, while they thus kept up his institutions among them. He speaks as one well-pleased with the appointment of the daily sacrifice, for before he proceeds to the other appointments that follow, he interposeth these promises. It is constancy in religion that brings in the comfort of it. He promiseth, 1. That he would keep up communion with them; that he would not only meet Moses, and speak to him, but that he would *meet the children of Israel*, ver. 43. to accept the daily sacrifices offered up on their behalf. Note, God will not fail to give those the meeting, who diligently and conscientiously attend upon him in the ordinances of his own appointment. 2. That he would own his own institutions, the tabernacle, the altar, the priesthood, ver. 43, 44. he would take possession of that which was consecrated to him. Note, What is sanctified *to the glory of God*, shall be *sanctified by his glory*. If we do our part, God will do his, and will mark and fit that for himself which is in sincerity given up to him. 3. That he would reside among them as a God in covenant with them, and would give them sure and comfortable tokens of his peculiar favour to them, and his special presence with them; ver. 45, 46. *I will dwell among the children of Israel*. Note, Where God sets up the tabernacle of his ordinances, he will himself dwell: *Lo, I am with you always*, Mat. xxviii. 20. Those that abide in God's house, he will abide with them. *I will be their God, and they shall know that I am so*. Note, Those are truly happy that have a covenant interest in God as theirs, and the comfortable evidence of that interest. If we have this, we have enough, and need no more to make us happy.

## C H A P. XXX.

Moses is in this chapter further instructed, 1. Concerning the altar of incense, ver. 1—10. 2. Concerning the ransom money which the Israelites were to pay, when they were numbered, ver. 11—16. 3. Concerning the laver of brass, which was set for the priests to wash in, ver. 17—21. 4. Concerning the making up of the anointing oil, and the use of it, ver. 22—33. 5. Concerning the incense and perfume, which was to be burned on the golden altar, ver. 34—38.

1. **A**ND thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim-wood shalt thou make it. 2. A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof (four-square shall it be) and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. 3. And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof: and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4. And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it: and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. 5. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold. 6. And thou shalt put it before the vail, that is by the ark of the testimony; before the mercy-seat, that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. 7. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps he shall burn incense upon it. 8. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it; a perpetual incense before the LORD, throughout your generations. 9. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-sacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither shall ye pour drink-offering thereon. 10. And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

The orders given concerning the altar of incense are, 1. That it was to be made of wood, and covered with gold, pure gold, about a yard high, and half a yard square, with horns at the corners, a golden cornish round it, with rings and staves of gold, for the convenience of carrying it, ver. 1—5. It doth not appear that there was any grate to this altar, for the ashes to fall into, that they might be taken away; but when they burnt incense, a golden censer was brought with coals in it, and placed upon the altar, and in that censer the incense was burnt, and with it all the coals were taken away, so that no coals or ashes fell upon the altar. The measure of the altar of incense in Ezekiel's temple, is double to what it is here, *Ezek. xli. 22*. and it is there called an altar of wood, and there is no mention of gold, to signify that the incense in gospel times should be spiritual, the worship plain, and the service of God enlarged, for *in every place incense should be offered*, Mal. i. 11. 2. That it was to be placed before the vail, on the outside of that partition, but before the mercy-seat, which was within the vail, ver. 6. For though he that ministered at that altar could not see the mercy-seat, the vail interposing, yet he must look towards it, and direct his incense that way, to teach us, that though we cannot with our bodily eyes see the throne of grace, that blessed mercy-seat, for it is such a throne of glory, that God in compassion to us holdeth back the face of it, and spreadeth a cloud upon it, yet we must in prayer by faith set our selves before it, direct our prayer, and look up. 3. That Aaron was to burn sweet incense upon this altar every morning, and every evening, about half a pound at a time, which was intended not only to take away the ill smell of the flesh that was burnt daily on the brazen altar, but for the honour of God, and to shew the acceptableness of his peoples services to him, and the pleasure which they should take in ministering to him, ver. 7, 8. As by the offerings on the brazen altar satisfaction was made for what had been done displeasing to God, so by the offering on this, what they did well, was as it were recommended to the divine acceptance, for our two great concerns with God are to be acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in his sight. 4. That nothing was to be offered upon it but incense, nor any incense but that which was appointed, ver. 9. God will have his own service done according to his own appointment, and not otherwise. 5. That this altar should be purified with the blood of the sin-offering put upon the horns of it, every year, upon the day of atonement, ver. 10. see *Lev. xvi. 18, 19*. The high priest was to take this in his way as he came out from the holy of holies. This was to intimate to them, that the sins of the priests that ministered at this altar, and of the people for whom they ministered, put a ceremonial impurity upon it, from which it must be cleansed by the blood of atonement.

This incense altar typified, (1.) The mediation of Christ. The brazen altar in the court, was a type of Christ dying on earth; the golden altar in the sanctuary, was a type of Christ interceding in heaven, in the virtue of his satisfaction. This altar was before the mercy-seat, for Christ always appears in the presence of God for us; he is our *advocate with the Father*, 1 Joh. ii. 1. and his intercession is unto God of a sweet smelling savour. This altar had a crown fixed to it, for Christ intercedes as a king,



king, *Father, I will*, Joh. xvii 24. (2.) The devotions of the saints, whose prayers are said to be set forth before God as incense, *Psal. cxli. 2.* As the smoke of the incense ascended, so must our desires towards God rise in prayer, being kindled with the fire of holy love, and other pious affections. When the priest was burning incense, the people were praying, *Luk. i. 10.* to signify that prayer is the true incense. This incense was offered daily, it was a perpetual incense, *ver. 8.* for we must pray always, *i. e.* we must keep up stated times for prayer every day, morning and evening at least, and never omit it, but thus pray without ceasing. The Lamps were dressed or lighted, at the same time that the incense was burnt, to teach us that the reading of the scriptures (which are our light and lamp) is a part of our daily work, and should ordinarily accompany our prayers and praises. When we speak to God, we must hear what God saith to us, and thus the communion is compleat. The devotions of sanctified souls are well-pleasing to God, of a sweet smelling favour, the prayers of saints are compared to sweet odours, *Rev. v. 8.* but it is the incense which Christ adds to them that makes them acceptable, *Rev. viii. 3.* and his blood that atones for the guilt which cleaves to our best services. And if the heart and life be not holy, even *incense is an abomination*, *Isa. i. 13.* and he that offers it is *as if he blessed an idol*, *Isa. lxvi. 3.*

11. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 12. When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number; then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them: that there be no plague amongst them, when thou numberest them. 13. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered; half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. 14. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. 15. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls. 16. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Some observe, that the repetition of those words, *the Lord spake unto Moses*, here and afterwards, *ver. 17, 22, 34.* intimates that God did not deliver these precepts to Moses in the mount, in a continued discourse, but with many intermissions, giving him time either to write what was said to him, or at least to charge his memory with it. Christ gave instructions to his disciples, as they were able to hear them. He is here ordered to levy money upon the people by way of poll, so much a head, for the service of the tabernacle. This he must do when he numbered the people; some think it refers only to the first numbering of them, now when the tabernacle was set up; and that this tax was to make up what was wanting in the voluntary contributions for the finishing of the work, or rather for the beginning of the service in the tabernacle. Others think it was afterwards repeated upon any emergency, and always when the people were numbered; and that David offended in not demanding it when he numbered the people. But many of the Jewish writers, and others from them, are of opinion, that it was to be an annual tribute, only it was begun when Moses first numbered the people. This was that tribute money which Christ paid for fear of offending his adversaries, *Mat. xvii. 24.* when yet he shewed good reason why he should have been excused. Men were appointed in every city to receive this payment yearly. Now, 1. The tribute to be paid was *half a shekel*, about fifteen pence of our money. The rich were not to give more, nor the poor less, *ver. 15.* to intimate that the souls of the rich and poor are alike precious, and that God is *no respecter of persons*, *Job xxxiv. 19.* In other offerings men were to give according to their ability, but this, which was the *ransom of the soul* must be alike for all, for the rich have as much need of Christ as the poor, and the poor are as welcome to him as the rich. They both alike contributed to the maintenance of the temple service, because both were to have alike interest in it, and benefit by it. In Christ and his ordinances, *rich and poor meet together, the Lord is the maker*, the Lord Christ is the redeemer of them both, *Prov. xxii. 2.* The Jews say, If a man refus'd to pay this tribute, he was not comprehended in the expiation. 2. This tribute was to be paid as a *ransom of the soul*, that there might be no plague among them. Hereby they acknowledged that they received their lives from God, that they had forfeited their lives to him, and that they depended upon his power and patience for the continuance of them: and thus they did homage to the God of their lives, and depre-

cated those plagues which their sins had deserved. 3. This money that was raised, was to be employed in the service of the tabernacle, *ver. 16.* with it they bought sacrifices, flowers, incense, wine, oil, fuel, salt, priests garments, and all other things which the whole congregation was interested in. Note, Those that have the benefit of God's tabernacle among them, must be willing to pay the expences of it, and not grudge the necessary charges of God's publick worship. Thus we must honour the Lord with our substance, and reckon that best laid out, which is laid out in the service of God. Money indeed cannot make an atonement for the soul, but it may be used for the honour of him who has made the atonement, and for the maintenance of the gospel, by which the atonement is applied.

17. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 18. Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. 19. For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. 20. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not: or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD. 21. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

Orders are here given, 1. For the making of a laver, or font of brass, a large vessel, that would contain a good quantity of water, which was to be set near the door of the tabernacle, *ver. 18.* the foot of brass, it is supposed, was so contrived as to receive the water, which was let into it out of the laver by spouts or cocks. They then had a laver for the priests only to wash in, but to us now there is a fountain opened for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in, *Zech. xiii. 1.* an inexhaustible fountain of living water, so that it is our own fault if we remain in our pollution. 2. For the using of this laver; Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet at this laver every time they went in to minister, every morning at least, *ver. 19, 20, 21.* For this purpose clean water was put into the laver fresh every day. Though they washed themselves never so clean at their own houses, that would not serve, they must wash at the laver, because that was appointed for washing, *2 Kings v. 12.* This was designed, (1.) To teach them purity in all their ministrations, and to possess them with a reverence of God's holiness, and a dread of the pollutions of sin. They must not only wash and be made clean when they were first consecrated, but they must wash and be kept clean whenever they went in to minister. He only shall stand in God's holy place, that hath clean hands and a pure heart, *Psal. xxiv. 3, 4.* And, (2.) It was to teach us who are daily to attend upon God, daily to renew our repentance for sin, and our believing application of the blood of Christ to our souls for remission; for in many things we daily offend and contract pollution, *John xiii. 10.* This is the preparation we are to make for solemn ordinances, *Cleanse your hands, and purify your hearts, and then draw nigh to God.* *Jam. iv. 8.* To this law David alludes, *Psal. xxvi. 6. I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.*

22. Moreover, the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 23. Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, 24. And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil-olive an hin. 25. And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil. 26. And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, 27. And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense. 28. And the altar of burnt-offering with all its vessels, and the laver and his foot. 29. And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them, shall be holy. 30. And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priests office. 31. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. 32. Upon mans flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you. 33. Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whatsoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people. 34. And the LORD said unto



Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight. 35. And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy. 36. And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy. 37. And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, you shall not make to your selves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD. 38. Whosoever shall make like unto that to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

Directions are here given for the composition of the holy anointing oil, and the incense, that were to be used in the service of the tabernacle; with these God was to be honoured, and therefore he would appoint the making of them; for nothing comes to God but what comes from him.

1. The holy anointing oil is here ordered to be made up: the ingredients, and their quantities, are here prescribed, *ver.* 24, 25. Interpreters are not agreed concerning them; we are sure in general they were the best and fittest for the purpose, they must needs be so when the divine wisdom appointed them for the divine honour. It was to be compounded *secundum artem*, *ver.* 25. the spices which were in all near half a hundred weight were to be infused in the oil, which was to be about five or six quarts, and then strained out, leaving an admirable sweet smell in the oil. With this oil God's tent and all the furniture of it were to be anointed, it was to be used also in the consecration of the priests, *ver.* 26—30. It was to be continued *throughout their generations*, *ver.* 31. The tradition of the Jews is, that this very oil which was prepared by Moses himself lasted till near the captivity. But bishop Patrick shews the great improbability of the tradition, and supposeth it was repeated according to the prescription here, for Solomon was anointed with it, *1 Kings* i. 39. and some other of the kings, and all the high priests, with such a quantity of it, as that it ran down to the skirts of the garments; and we read of the making up of this ointment, *1 Chron.* ix. 30. yet all agree that in the second temple there was none of this holy oil, which he supposeth was owing to a notion they had that it was not lawful to make it up; providence over-ruling that want as a preface of the better unction of the holy Ghost in gospel times, the variety of whose gifts was typified by these several sweet ingredients: to shew the excellency of holiness, there was that in the tabernacle which was in the highest degree grateful both to the sight and to the smell. Christ's name is said to be as *ointment poured forth*, *Cant.* i. 3. and the good name of christians better than *precious ointment*, *Eccl.* vii. 1.

2. The incense which was burned upon the golden altar, this was prepared of sweet spices likewise, though not so rare and rich as those which the anointing oil was compounded of, *ver.* 34, 35. This was prepared once a year (the Jews say) a pound for each day of the year, and three pound over for the day of atonement: When it was used it was to be beaten very small; thus it pleased the Lord to bruise the redeemer, when he offered himself for a sacrifice of a sweet smelling favour.

Concerning both these preparations the same law is here given, *ver.* 32, 33, 37, 38. that the like should not be made for any common use. Thus God would preserve in the people's minds a reverence for his own institutions, and teach us not to profane or abuse any thing whereby God makes himself known, as they did, who invented to themselves instruments of musick like David. It is a great affront to God to jest with sacred things, and to make sport with the word and ordinances of God. That which is God's peculiar must not be used as a common thing.

## C H A P. XXXI.

God is here drawing towards a conclusion of what he had to say to Moses upon the mount, where he had now been with him forty days and forty nights, and yet no more is recorded of what was said to him in all that time, but what we have read in the six chapters foregoing. In this, 1. He appoints what workmen should be employed in the building and furnishing of the tabernacle, *ver.* 1—11. 2. He repeats the law of the sabbath, and the religious observation of it, *ver.* 12—17. 3. He delivers him the two tables of the testimony at parting, *ver.* 18.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. See, I have called by name, Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4. To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5. And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. 6.

And I, behold, I have given with him, Aholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom; that they may make all that I have commanded thee: 7. The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle, 8. And the table and his furniture, and the pure candlestick with all his furniture, and the altar of incense, 9. And the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot, 10. And the clothes of service, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priests office, 11. And the anointing oil, and sweet incense for the holy place: according to all that I have commanded thee, shall they do.

A great deal of fine work God had ordered to be done about the tabernacle, the materials the people were to provide, but who must put them into form? Moses himself was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, nay, he was well acquainted with the words of God, and the visions of the almighty, but he knew not how to engrave or embroider; we may suppose there were some very ingenious men among the Israelites, but having lived all their days in bondage in Egypt, we cannot think they were any of them instructed in these curious arts. They knew how to make brick, and work in clay, but to work in gold, and cut diamonds, was what they had never been brought up to. How should the work be done with that neatness and exactness that was required, when they had no goldsmiths or jewellers, but what must be made out of masons and bricklayers? We may suppose there were enough that would gladly be employed, and would do their best, but it would be hard to find out a proper person to preside in this work; *Who was sufficient for these things?* But God takes care of this matter also.

1. He nominates the persons that were to be employed, that there might be no contest about the preferment, nor envy at those that were preferred, God himself having made the choice. (1.) Bezaleel was to be the architect, or master-workman, *ver.* 2. He was of the tribe of Judah, a tribe that God did delight to honour; the grandson of Hur, probably that Hur who had helped to hold up Moses's hands, *chap.* xvii. and was at this time in commission with Aaron for the government of the people in the absence of Moses, *chap.* xxiv. 14. out of that family, which was of note in Israel, was this workman chosen; and it added no little honour to the family, that a branch of it was employed, though but as a mechanic or handicraft tradesman, for the service of the tabernacle. The Jews tradition is, that Hur was the husband of Miriam; and then it was requisite God should appoint him to this service, lest if Moses himself had done it he should have been thought partial to his own kindred, his brother Aaron also being advanced to the priesthood. God will put honour upon Moses's relations, and yet will make it to appear that he takes not the honour to himself, or his own family, but it is purely the Lord's doing. (2.) Aholiab of the tribe of Dan is appointed next to Bezaleel, and partner with them, *ver.* 6. Two is better than one. Christ sent forth his disciples who were to rear the gospel tabernacle, two and two, and we read of his two witnesses. Aholiab was of the tribe of Dan, which was one of the less honourable tribes, that the tribes of Judah and Levi might not be lifted up as if they were to engross all the preferments; to prevent a schism in the body, God gives honour to *that part which lacked*, *1 Cor.* xii. 24. *The head cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee.* Hiram, who was the head-workman in the building of Solomon's temple, was also of the tribe of Dan, *2 Chron.* ii. 14. (3.) There were others that were employed by and under these, in the several operations about the tabernacle, *ver.* 6. Note, When God hath work to do, he will never want instruments to do with, for all hearts, and heads too, are under his eye, and in his hand; and those may cheerfully go about any service for God, and go on in it, who have reason to think, that one way or other he has called them to it, for whom he calls he will own and bear out.

2. He qualifies these persons for the service, *ver.* 3. *I have filled him with the Spirit of God*; and *ver.* 6. *in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom.* Note, 1. Skill in common arts and employments is the gift of God, from him is both the faculty, and the improvement of the faculty. It is he that puts even this *wisdom into the inward parts*, *Job* xxxviii. 36. He teacheth the husbandmen discretion, *Isa.* xxviii. 26. and the tradesmen too, and he must have the praise of it. 2. God dispenseth his gifts variously, one gift to one, another to another, and all for the good of the whole body, both of mankind, and of the church. Moses was fittest of all to govern Israel, but Bezaleel was fitter than he to build the tabernacle. The common benefit is very much supported by the variety of mens faculties and inclinations; the genius of some leads them to be serviceable one way, of others another way, and *all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit*, *1 Cor.* xii. 11. This forbids pride, envy, contempt and emulation, and strengthens the bond of mutual love. 3. Those whom God



God calls to any service he will either find them, or make them fit for it. If God give the commission, he will in some measure give the qualifications, according as the service is. The work that was to be done here was to make the tabernacle, and the utensils of it, which are here particularly reckoned up, *ver. 7, &c.* And for this the persons employed were enabled to *work in gold, and silver, and brass.* When Christ sent his apostles to rear the gospel tabernacle, he poured out his Spirit upon them to enable them to speak with tongues the wonderful works of God; not to work upon metal, but to work upon men; so much more excellent were the gifts, as the tabernacle to be pitched was a *greater and more perfect tabernacle*, as the apostle calls it, *Heb. ix. 7.*

12. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 13. Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you. 14. Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore: for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from amongst his people. 15. Six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doth any work in the sabbath-day, he shall surely be put to death. 16. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. 17. It is a sign between me, and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. 18. And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

Here is, 1. A strict command for the sanctification of the sabbath-day, *ver. 13—17.* The law of the sabbath had been given them, before any other law, by way of preparation, *Exod. xvi. 23.* It had been inserted in the body of the moral law, in the fourth commandment; it had been annexed to the judicial law, *chap. xxiii. 12, 13.* And here it is added to the first part of the ceremonial law, because the observance of the sabbath is indeed the hem and hedge of the whole law: where no conscience is made of that, farewell both godliness and honesty; for in the moral law it stands in the midst between the two tables. Some suggest that it comes in here upon another account. Orders were now given that a tabernacle should be set up and furnished for the service of God, with all possible expedition; but lest they should think that the nature of the work, and the haste that was required, would justify them in working at it on sabbath-days, that they might get it done the sooner, this caution is seasonably inserted, *Verily, or, nevertheless, my sabbaths ye shall keep.* Though they must hasten the work, yet they must not make more haste than good speed; they must not break the law of the sabbath in their haste: even tabernacle-work must give way to the sabbath-rest; so jealous is God for the honour of his sabbaths. Observe what is here said concerning the sabbath-day.

1. The nature, meaning, and intention of the sabbath, by the declaration of which God puts an honour upon it, and teacheth us to value it. Divers things are here said of the sabbath. (1.) *It is a sign between me and you*, *ver. 13.* and again, *ver. 17.* The institution of the sabbath was a great instance of God's favour to them, and a sign that he had distinguished them from all other people: and their religious observance of the sabbath, was a great instance of their duty and obedience to him. God, by sanctifying this day among them, let them know that he sanctified them, and set them apart for himself and his service, otherwise he would not have revealed to them his holy sabbaths, to be the support of religion among them. Or, it may refer to the law concerning the sabbath, *Keep my sabbaths, that ye may know that I the Lord do sanctify you.* Note, If God, by his grace, *incline our hearts to keep the law* of the fourth commandment, it will be an evidence of a good work wrought in us by his Spirit. If we *sanctify God's day*, it is a sign between him and us that he hath *sanctified our hearts*: hence it is the character of the blessed man that he *keepeth the sabbath from polluting it*, *Isa. lvi. 2.* The Jews, by observing one day in seven, after six days labour, testified and declared, that they worshipped the God that made the world in six days, and rested the seventh; and so distinguished themselves from other nations, who having first lost the sabbath, which was instituted to be a memorial of the creation, by degrees lost the knowledge of the Creator, and gave that honour to the creature which was due to him alone. (2.) *It is holy unto you*, *ver. 14.* i. e. it is designed for your benefit as well as for God's honour; *the sabbath was made for man*; or, it shall be accounted holy by you, and shall so be observed, and you shall look upon it as sacrilege to profane it. (3.) *It is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord*, *ver. 15.* It is separated

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from common use, and designed for the honour and service of God, and by the observance of it we are taught to rest from worldly pursuits, and the service of the flesh, and devote our selves, and all we are, have, and can do, to God's glory. (4.) *It was to be observed throughout their generations, in every age, for a perpetual covenant*, *ver. 16.* This was to be one of the most lasting tokens of that covenant which was between God and Israel.

2. The law of the sabbath; they must keep it, *ver. 13, 14, 16.* Keep it as a treasure, as a trust, observe it, preserve it. Keep it from polluting it. Keep it up as a sign between God and them; keep it, and never part with it. The Gentiles had anniversary feasts to the honour of their gods; but it was peculiar to the Jews to have a weekly festival; this therefore they must carefully observe.

3. The reason of the sabbath; for God's laws are not only backed with the highest authority, but supported with the best reason. *God's own example* is the great reason, *ver. 17.* As the work of creation is worthy to be thus commemorated, so the great creator is worthy to be thus imitated, by a holy rest the seventh day, after six days labour, especially since we hope, in further conformity to the same example, shortly to rest with him *from all our labours.*

4. The penalty to be inflicted for the breach of this law. Every one that *defileth the sabbath*, by doing *any work therein*, but works of piety and mercy, *shall be cut off from among his people*, *ver. 14.* *He shall surely be put to death*, *ver. 15.* The magistrate must cut him off with the sword of justice, if the crime can be proved; if it cannot, or if the magistrate be remiss, and do not do his duty, God will take the work into his own hands, and cut him off by a stroke from heaven, and his family shall be rooted out of Israel. Note, The contempt and profanation of the sabbath-day, is an iniquity to be punished by the judges; and if men do not punish it, God will, here or hereafter, unless it be repented of.

2. The delivering of the two tables of testimony to Moses. God had promised him these tables when he called him up into the mount, *chap. xxiv. 12.* and now, when he was sending him down, he delivered them to him to be carefully and honourably deposited in the ark, *ver. 18.* (1.) The ten commandments which God had spoken upon mount Sinai in the hearing of all the people, were now written, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, because that which is written remains. (2.) They were written in *tables of stone*, prepared not by Moses, as it should seem, (for it is intimated, *chap. xxiv. 12.* that he found them ready written when he went up to the mount) but some think by the ministry of angels. The law was written in *tables of stone*, to note the perpetual duration of it; what can be supposed to last longer than that which is written in stone, and laid up? to note likewise the hardness of our hearts; one might easier write in stone, than write any thing that is good in our corrupt and sinful hearts. (3.) They were written *with the finger of God*, i. e. by his will and power immediately, without the use of any instrument. It is God only that can write his law in the heart, he *gives a heart of flesh*, and then by his Spirit, which is the *finger of God*, he writes his will in the *fleshy tables of the heart*, *2 Cor. iii. 3.* (4.) They were written in two tables, being designed to direct us in our duty both towards God, and towards man. (5.) They are called tables of testimony, because this written law testified both the will of God concerning them, and his good will towards them, and would be a testimony against them if they were disobedient. (6.) They were delivered to Moses, probably with a charge, before he laid them up in the ark, to shew them publicly, that they might be *seen and read of all men*, and so what they had heard with the hearing of the ear might now be brought to their remembrance. Thus *the law was given by Moses*; but *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

#### C H A P. XXXII.

*It is a very lamentable interruption which the story of this chapter gives, to the record of the establishment of the church, and of religion among the Jews. Things went on admirably well towards that happy settlement, God had shewed himself very favourable, and the people also had seemed to be pretty tractable; Moses had now almost compleated his forty days upon the mount, and we may suppose was pleasing himself with the thoughts of the very joyful welcome he should have to the camp of Israel at his return, and the speedy setting up of the tabernacle among them: But behold the measures are broke, the sin of Israel turns away those good Things from them, and puts a stop to the current of God's favours; the sin that did the mischief (would you think it) was worshipping a golden calf. The marriage was ready to be solemnized between God and Israel, but Israel plays the harlot, and so the match is broke, and it will be no easy matter to piece it again. Here is, 1. The sin of Israel, and Aaron particularly, in making the golden calf for a god, *ver. 1—4.* and worshipping it, *ver. 5, 6.* 2. The notice which God gave of this to Moses, who was now in the mount with him, *ver. 7, 8.* and the sentence of his wrath against them, *ver. 9, 10.* 3. The intercession which Moses immediately made for them in the mount, *ver. 11, 12, 13.* and the prevalency of that intercession, *ver. 14.**



4. *His coming down from the mount, when he became an eye-witness of their idolatry, ver. 15—19. in detestation of which, and a just indignation at it, he brake the tables, ver. 19. and burnt the golden calf, ver. 20.* 5. *The examination of Aaron about it, ver. 21—24.* 6. *Execution done upon the ring-leaders in the idolatry, ver. 25—29.* 7. *The further intercession Moses made for them, to turn away the wrath of God from them, ver. 30, 32. and a reprieve granted thereupon, reserving them for a farther reckoning, ver. 33—35.*

1. **A**ND when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 2. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. 3. And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graven tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow, is a feast to the LORD. 6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

While Moses was in the mount receiving the law from God, the people had time to meditate upon what had been delivered, and prepare themselves for what was farther to be revealed, and forty days was little enough for that work; but instead of that, there were those among them that were contriving how to break the laws they had already received, and to anticipate those which they were in expectation of. On the thirty ninth day of the forty, the plot broke out, of rebellion against the Lord. Here is,

1. A tumultuous address which the people made to Aaron, who was intrusted with the government in the absence of Moses, ver. 1. *Up, make us gods which shall go before us.* (1.) See the ill effect of Moses's absence from them; if he had not had God's call both to go and stay, he had not been altogether free from blame. Those that have the charge of others, as magistrates, ministers, and masters of families, ought not without just cause to absent themselves from their charge, *lest satan get advantage thereby.* (2.) See the fury and violence of a multitude, when they are influenced and corrupted by such as lie in wait to deceive. Some few it is likely were at first possessed with this humour, while many who would never have thought of it if they had not put it in their hearts, were brought to follow their pernicious ways, and presently such a multitude were carried down this stream, that the few who abhorred the proposal durst not so much as enter their protestation against it. Behold, *how great a matter a little fire kindles.*

Now what was the matter with this giddy multitude?

(1.) They were weary of waiting for the promised land. They thought themselves detained too long at mount Sinai, though there they lay very safe and very easy, well fed, and well taught, yet they were undone to be going forward; they had a God that stayed with them, and manifested his presence with them by the cloud, but that would not serve, they must have a god to go before them; they are for hastning to the land *flowing with milk and honey*, and cannot stay to take their religion along with them. Note, Those that would anticipate God's counsels, are commonly precipitate in their own. We must first wait for God's law before we catch at his promises. He that believeth doth not make haste; not more haste than good speed.

(2.) They were weary of waiting for the return of Moses: When he went up into the mount he had not told them, for God had not told him, how long he must stay; and therefore when he had out-staid their time, though they were every way well provided for in his absence, some ill people advanced I know not what surmises concerning his delay; *As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.* Observe, 1. How slightly they speak of his person, *this Moses.* Thus ungrateful are they to Moses, who had shewed such a tender concern for them, and thus do they walk contrary to God. While God delights to put honour upon him, they delight to put contempt upon him, and this to the face of Aaron his brother, and now his vice-roy. Note, The greatest merits cannot secure men from the greatest indignities and affronts in this ungrateful world. 2. How suspiciously they speak of his delay, *we wot not what is become of him*; they thought he was

either consumed by the devouring fire, or starved for want of food, as if that God who kept and fed them that were so unworthy, would not take care for the protection and supply of Moses his favourite. Some of them that were willing to think well of Moses, perhaps suggested that he was translated to heaven like Enoch, while others that cared not how ill they thought of him, insinuated that he had out-ran his undertaking, as unable to go on with it, and was returned to his father-in-law to keep his flock. All these suggestions were perfectly groundless and absurd, nothing could be more so; it was easy to tell *what was become of him*: He was seen go into the cloud, and the cloud he went into was still seen by all Israel upon the top of the mount; They had all the reason in the world to conclude that he was safe there; if the Lord had been pleased to kill him, he would not have shewed him such favours as these. If he tarried long, it was because God had a great deal to say to him, for their good; he resided upon the mount as their ambassador, and he would certainly return, as soon as he had finished the business he went upon; and yet they make this the colour for their wicked proposal, *we wot not what is become of him.* Note, 1. Those that are resolved to think ill when they have never so much reason to think well, commonly pretend that they know not what to think. 2. Misinterpretations of our Redeemer's delays, is the occasion of a great deal of wickedness. Our Lord Jesus is gone up into the mount of glory, where he is appearing in the presence of God for us, but out of our sight, the heavens must contain him, must conceal him, that we may live by faith, There he has been long, there he is yet; hence unbelievers suggest that they *wot not what is become of him*; and ask, *Where is the promise of his coming?* 2 Pet. iii. 4. as if because he is not come yet, he would never come. The wicked servant emboldens himself in his impieties with this consideration, *My Lord delays his coming.* 3. Short spiritedness, and weariness in waiting, betrays us to a great many temptations. This began Saul's ruin, he stayed for Samuel to the last hour of the time appointed, but had not patience to stay that hour, 1 Sam. xiii. 11, 14. so Israel here, if they could but have stayed one day longer, would have seen what was become of Moses. *The Lord is a God of judgment*, and must be waited for till he comes, waited for though he tarry, and then we shall not lose our labour, for he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

(3.) They were weary of waiting for a divine institution of religious worship among them, for that was the thing they were now in expectation of. They were told that they must *serve God in this mountain*, and fond enough they would be of the pomp and ceremony of it, but because that was not appointed them so soon as they wished, they would set their own wits on work to devise signs of God's presence with them, and would glory in them, and have a worship of their own invention, probably such as they had seen among the Egyptians; for Stephen saith, that when they said unto Aaron, *Make us gods*; they did in heart *turn back into Egypt*, Acts vii. 39, 40. This was a very strange motion, *Up, make us gods.* If they wot not what was become of Moses, and thought him lost, it had been decent for them to have appointed a solemn mourning for him, for certain days, but see how soon so great a benefactor is forgotten. If they had said, *Moses is lost, make us a governor*, there had been some sense in it, though a great deal of ingratitude to the memory of Moses, and contempt of Aaron and Hur, who were left Lords Justices in his absence; but to say, *Moses is lost, make us a god*, was the greatest absurdity imaginable. Was Moses their god? Had he ever pretended to be so? Whatever was become of Moses, was it not evident beyond contradiction, that God was still with them? And had they any room to question his leading of their camp, who victualled it so well every day? Could they have any other god that would provide so well for them as he had done, nay, as he now did? And yet, *Make us gods, which shall go before us.* Gods! How many would they have? Is not one sufficient? *Make us gods*; and what good would gods of their own making do them? They must have such gods to go before them, as could not go themselves further than they were carried. So wretchedly besotted and intoxicated are idolaters. They are *mad upon their idols*, Jer. l. 38.

2. Here is the demand which Aaron makes of their jewels thereupon, ver. 2. *bring me your golden ear-rings.* We do not find that he said one word to discountenance their proposal, did not reprove their insolence, did not reason with them to convince them of the sin and folly of it, but seemed to approve the motion, and shewed himself not unwilling to humour them in it. One would hope he designed at first only to make a jest of it, and by setting up a ridiculous image among them, to expose the motion, and shew them the folly of it. But if so, it proved ill jesting with sin, and of dangerous consequence, with the unwary fly to play about the candle. Some charitably suppose, that when Aaron bid them break off their ear-rings, and bring him those, he did it with design to crush the proposal; believing that though their covetousness would have let them *lavish gold out of the bag*, to make an idol of, Isa. xlvi. 6. yet their pride would not have suffered them to part with their golden ear-rings. But it is not safe



safe to try how far mens sinful lusts will carry them in a sinful way, and what expence they will be at; it proved here a dangerous experiment.

3. Here is the making of the golden calf, *ver.* 3, 4. (1.) The people brought in their ear-rings to Aaron, whose demand of them instead of discouraging the motion, perhaps did rather gratify their superstition, and beget in them a fancy that the gold taken from their ears would be the most acceptable, and would make a god the most valuable. Let their readiness to part with their rings to make an idol of, shame us out of our niggardliness in the service of the true God. Did not they stick at the charge of their idolatry, and shall we grudge the expences of our religion, or starve so good a cause? (2.) Aaron melted down their rings, and having a mold prepared for the purpose, poured the melted gold into it, and then produced it in the shape of an ox or calf, giving it some finishing strokes with a graving tool. Some think Aaron chose this figure for a sign or token of the divine presence, because he thought the head and horns of an ox a proper emblem of the divine power, and yet being so plain and common a thing, he hoped the people would not be so sottish as to worship it. But it is likely they had learnt of the Egyptians, thus to represent the deity, for it is said, *Ezek.* xx. 8. *They did not forsake the idols of Egypt*, and chap. xxiii. 8. *Neither left she her whoredoms brought from Egypt. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox*, *Psal.* cvi. 20. and proclaimed their own folly, beyond that of other idolaters who worshipped the host of heaven.

4. Having made the calf in Horeb, they worshipped the graven image, *Psal.* cvi. 19. (1.) Aaron seeing the people fond of their calf, was willing yet further to humour them, and he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a feast to the honour of it, *ver.* 5. a feast of dedication. Yet he calls it a feast to Jehovah; for as brutish as they were, they did not imagine that this image was it self a God, nor did they design to terminate their adoration in the image, but they made it for a representation of the true God, whom they intended to worship in and through this image, and yet this did not excuse them from gross idolatry, no more than it will excuse the papists, whose plea it is, that they did not worship the image, but God by the image; so making themselves just such idolaters as the worshippers of the golden calf, whose feast was a feast to Jehovah, and proclaimed to be so, that the most ignorant and unthinking might not mistake it. (2.) The people are forward enough to celebrate this feast, *ver.* 6. *They rose up early on the morrow*, to shew how well pleased they were with the solemnity, and according to the ancient rites of worship, they offered sacrifice to this new-made deity, and then feasted upon the sacrifice; thus having at the expence of their ear-rings made their god, they endeavour at the expence of their beasts to make this god propitious. Had they offered these sacrifices immediately to Jehovah, without the intervention of an image, they might (for ought I know) have been accepted, *Exod.* xx. 24. but having set up an image before them, as a symbol of God's presence, and so changed the truth of God into a lye, these sacrifices were an abomination, nothing could be more so. When this idolatry of theirs is spoken of in the New Testament, the account of their feast upon the sacrifice is quoted and referred to, *1 Cor.* x. 7. *They sat down to eat and drink of the remainder of what was sacrificed, and then rose up to play; to play the fool, to play the wanton. Like god, like worship. They would not have made a calf their god, if they had not first made their belly their god; but when the god was a jest, no marvel the service was sport; being vain in their imaginations, they became vain in their worship, so great was this vanity.*

Now, 1. It was strange that any of the people, especially so great a number of them, should do such a thing. Had they not but the other day, in this very place, heard the voice of the Lord God speaking to them out of the midst of the fire, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven image?* Had they not heard the thunder, seen the lightnings, and felt the earthquake, with the dreadful pomp of which this law was given? Had they not been particularly cautioned not to make gods of gold, *Exod.* xx. 23. Nay, had they not themselves solemnly entered into covenant with God, and promised that all that which he had said unto them they would do, and would be obedient, chap. xxiv. 7. And yet before they stirred from the place where this covenant had been solemnly ratified, and before the cloud was removed from the top of mount Sinai, thus to break an express command, in defiance of an express threatening, that this iniquity should be visited upon them and their children, what shall we think of it? It is a plain indication that the law was no more able to sanctify than it was to justify; by it is the knowledge of sin, but not the cure of it. This is intimated in the emphasis laid upon the place where this sin was committed; *Psal.* cvi. *They made a calf in Horeb*, the very place where the law was given: It was otherwise with those that received the gospel, they immediately turned from idols, *1 Thess.* i. 9.

2. It was especially strange that Aaron should be so deeply concerned in this sin, that he should make the calf, and proclaim the feast! Is this Aaron, the saint of the Lord? the brother of Moses

his prophet, that could speak so well? *Exod.* iv. 14. And yet speaks not one word against this idolatry. Is this he that had not only seen, but had been employed in summoning the plagues of Egypt, and the judgments executed upon the gods of the Egyptians? what, and yet himself copying out the abandoned idolatries of Egypt? with what face could they say, *These are thy gods that brought thee up out of Egypt*, when they thus bring the idolatry of Egypt (the worst thing there) along with them? Is this Aaron, who had been with Moses in the mount, *Exod.* xix. 24. xxiv. 9. and knew there was no manner of similitude seen there, by which they might make an image? Is this Aaron, who was intrusted with the care of the people in the absence of Moses? Is he aiding and abetting in this rebellion against the Lord? How was it possible he should ever do so ill a thing? Either he was strangely surprised into it, and did it when he was half asleep, or he was frightened into it by the outrages of the rabble. The Jews have a tradition, that his colleague Hur opposing it, the people fell upon him and stoned him, and therefore we never read of him after, and that this frightened Aaron into a compliance: And God left him to himself, 1. To teach us what the best of men are when they are so left, that we may cease from man, and that he that thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall. 2. Aaron was at this time destined by the divine appointment to the great office of the priesthood; though he knew it not, Moses in the mount did; now lest he should be lifted up above measure, with the honours that were to be put upon him, a messenger of satan was suffered to prevail over him, that the remembrance thereof might keep him humble all his days. He that had once shamed himself so far as to build an altar to a golden calf, must own himself altogether unworthy of the honour of attending at the altar of God, and purely indebted to free grace for it. Thus pride and boasting were for ever silenced, and a good effect brought out of a bad cause. By this likewise it was shewed that the law made them priests which had infirmity, and needed first to offer for their own sins.

7. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down: for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. 8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 9. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. 10. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. 11. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? 12. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. 13. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of, will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. 14. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Here, 1. God acquaints Moses with what was a doing in the camp, while he was absent, *ver.* 7, 8. He could have told him sooner, as soon as the first step was taken towards it, and have hastened him down to prevent it, but he suffered it to come to this height, for wise and holy ends, and then sent him down to punish it. Note, It is no reproach to the holiness of God that he suffers sin to be committed, since he knows not only how to restrain it when he pleaseth, but how to make it serviceable to the designs of his own glory. Observe what God here saith to Moses concerning this sin. (1.) That they had corrupted themselves; sin is the corruption or depravation of the sinner, and it is a self-corruption; every man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lust. (2.) That they had turned aside out of the way. Sin is a deviation from the way of our duty into a by-path; when they promised to do all that God should command them, they set out as fair as could be; but now they missed their way, and turned aside. (3.) That they had turned aside quickly; quickly after the law was given them, and they had promised to obey it; quickly after God had done such great things for them, and declared his kind intentions to do greater. *They soon forgot his works.* To fall into sin quickly after we have renewed our covenants with God, or received special mercy from him, is very provoking. (4.) He tells him particularly what they had done, *they have made a calf, and worshipped it*,  
Note,



Note, Those sins which are concealed from our governors, are naked and open before God. He sees that which they cannot discover, nor is any of the wickedness in the world hid from him. We could not bear to see the thousandth part of that provocation which God sees every day, and yet keeps silence. (5.) He seems to disown them, in saying to Moses they are *thy people, which thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt*, q. d. I will not own any relation to them, or concern for them; let it never be said they are my people, or that I brought them out of Egypt. Note, Those that corrupt themselves, not only shame themselves, but even make God himself ashamed of them, and of his kindness to them. (6.) He sends him down to them with all speed; *Go get thee down*. He must break off even his communion with God, to go and do his duty as a magistrate among the people; so must Joshua, chap. vii. 10. Every thing is beautiful in its season.

2. He expresseth his displeasure against Israel for this sin, and the resolves of his justice to cut them off, ver. 9, 10. (1.) He gives this people their true character, *It is a stiff-necked people*, unapt to come under the yoke of the divine law, and governed as it were by a spirit of contradiction, averse to all good, and prone to evil; obstinate to the methods of cure and conduct. Note, The righteous God not only sees what we do, but what we are; not only the actions of our lives, but the disposition of our spirits, and hath an eye to them in all his proceedings. (2.) He declares what was their just desert, that his wrath should *wax hot against them*, so as to consume them at once, and *blot out their name from under heaven*, Deut. ix. 14. not only cast them out of covenant, but chase them out of the world. Note, Sin exposeth us to the wrath of God, and that wrath if it be not allayed by divine mercy will burn us up as stubble. It were just with God to let the law have its course against sinners, and to cut them off immediately in the very act of sin; and if he should do so, it would be neither loss nor dishonour to him. (3.) He speaks Moses fair not to intercede for them; therefore, *let me alone*. What did Moses, or what could he do to hinder God from consuming them? when God resolves to abandon a people, and the decree of ruin is gone forth, no intercession can prevent it, Ezek. xiv. 14. Jer. xv. 1. But God would thus express the greatness of his just displeasure against them, after the manner of men, who would have none to intercede for those they resolve to be severe with. Thus also he would put an honour upon prayer, intimating, that nothing but the intercession of Moses could save them from ruin, that he might be a type of Christ, by whose mediation alone God would *reconcile the world unto himself*. That the intercession of Moses might appear the more illustrious, God fairly offers him, that if he would not interpose in this matter, he would *make of him a great nation*; that either in process of time he would raise up a people out of his loins, or that he would presently by some means or other bring another great nation under his government and conduct, so that he should be no loser by their ruin. Had Moses been of a narrow selfish spirit, he would have closed with this offer; but he prefers the salvation of Israel before the advancement of his own family; here was a man fit to be a governor.

3. Moses earnestly intercedes with God on their behalf, ver. 11, 12, 13. he besought the Lord his God. If God would not be called the God of Israel, yet he hoped he might address to him as his own God. What interest we have at the throne of grace, we should improve it for the church of God, and for our friends.

Now Moses is *standing in the gap* to turn away the wrath of God, Psal. cvi. 23. He wisely took the hint which God gave him, when he said, *let me alone*; which though it seemed to forbid his interceding, did really encourage it, by shewing what power the prayer of faith hath with God. In such a case God *wonders if there be no intercessor*, Isa. lix. 16.

Observe, 1. His prayer, ver. 12. *Turn from thy fierce wrath*; not as if he thought God were not justly angry; but he begs that he would not be so greatly angry as to consume them. Let mercy rejoice against judgment; *repent of this evil*, change the sentence of destruction into that of correction. 2. His pleas. He fills his mouth with arguments, not to move God, but to express his own faith, and to excite his own fervency in prayer. He urgeth, 1. God's interest in them, and the great things he had already done for them, and the vast expence of favours and miracles he had been at upon them, ver. 11. God had said to Moses, ver. 7. they are *thy people which thou broughtest up out of Egypt*; but Moses humbly turns them back upon God again, they are *thy people*, thou art their Lord and owner, I am but their servant, *thou broughtest them forth out of Egypt*, I was but the instrument in thy hand; that was done in order to their deliverance, which thou only couldst do. Though their being his people was a reason why he should be angry with them, for setting up another god, yet it was a reason why he should not be angry with them so as to consume them. Nothing more natural than for a father to correct his son, but nothing more unnatural than for a father to slay his son. And as the relation is a good plea, they are *thy people*, so is the experience they had had of his kindness to them, *thou broughtest them out of Egypt*, though they were unworthy, and had there *served the gods of the Egyptians*, Josh. xxiv. 15. If thou didst that for

them, notwithstanding their sins in Egypt, wilt thou undo it for their sins of the same nature in the wilderness? 2. He pleads the concern of God's glory, ver. 12. *Wherefore should the Egyptians say, for mischief did he bring them out?* Israel is dear to Moses, as his kindred, as his charge; but it is the glory of God that he is most concerned for, that lies nearer his heart than any thing else. If Israel could perish without any reproach to God's name, Moses could persuade himself to sit down contented; but he cannot bear to hear God reflected on, and therefore this he insists upon, *Lord, What will the Egyptians say?* Their eyes, and the eyes of all the neighbouring nations, were now upon Israel; from the wondrous beginnings of that people, they raised their expectations of something great in their latter end; but if a people so strangely saved, should be suddenly ruined, what would the world say of it, especially the Egyptians, that have such an implacable hatred both to Israel, and to the God of Israel? They will say God was either weak, and could not, or fickle, and would not, compleat the salvation he begun; that he brought them forth to that mountain, not to sacrifice (as was pretended) but to be sacrificed. They will not consider the provocation given by Israel, to justify the proceeding, but will think it cause enough for triumph, that God and his people could not agree, but that their God had done that which they would have done. Note, The glorifying of God's name, as it ought to be our first petition (it is so in the Lord's prayer) so it ought to be our great plea, Psal. lxxix. 9. *Do not disgrace the throne of thy glory*, Jer. xiv. 21. and see, Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9. And if we would with comfort plead this with God, as a reason why he should not destroy us, we ought to plead it with our selves as a reason why we should not offend him, *What will the Egyptians say?* We ought always to be very careful that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed through us. 3. He pleads God's promise to the patriarchs, that he would multiply their seed, and give them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, and this promise confirmed by an oath, an oath by himself, since he could swear by no greater, ver. 13. God's promises are to be our pleas in prayer; for what he has promised he is able to perform, and the honour of his truth is engaged for the performance of it. Lord, if Israel be cut off, what will become of the promise? Shall their unbelief make that of no effect? God forbid. Thus we must take our encouragement in prayer from God only.

4. God graciously abates of the rigour of the sentence, and *repented of the evil he thought to do*, ver. 14. though he designed to punish them, yet he would not ruin them. See here, 1. The power of prayer; God suffers himself to be prevailed with by the humble believing importunity of intercessors. 2. The compassion of God towards poor sinners, and how ready he is to forgive. Thus he hath given other proof besides his own oath, that he had no pleasure in the death of them that die; for he not only pardons upon the repentance of sinners, but spares and reprieves upon the intercession of others for them.

15. And Moses turned and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side, and on the other were they written. 16. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables. 17. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. 18. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing, do I hear. 19. And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. 20. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.

Here is, 1. The favour of God to Moses, in trusting him with the two tables of the testimony, though of common stone, yet far more valuable than all the precious stones that adorned the breastplate of Aaron. *The topaz of Ethiopia could not equal them*, ver. 15, 16. God himself, without the ministry either of man or angel, for ought appears, wrote the ten commandments on these tables, *on both their sides*, some on one table, and some on the other, so that they were folded together like a book, to be deposited in the ark. 2. The familiarity between Moses and Joshua. While Moses was in the cloud, as in the presence-chamber, Joshua continued as near as he might in the anti-chamber (as it were) waiting till Moses came out, that he might be ready to attend him; and though he were all alone for forty days (fed it is likely with manna) yet he was not weary of waiting as the people were, but when Moses came down, he came with him, and not till then. And here we are told what constructions they put upon the noise that they heard in the camp, ver. 17, 18. Though Moses had been so long in immediate converse with God, yet he did not disdain to talk freely



freely with his servant Joshua. Those whom God advanceth, he preserves from being puffed up. Nor did he disdain to talk of the affairs of the camp. Blessed Paul was not the less mindful of the church on earth, for his having been in the third heavens, where he heard unspeakable words. Joshua, who was a military man, and had the command of the train-bands, feared there was a noise of war in the camp, and then he would be missed; but Moses having received notice of it from God, better distinguished the sound, and was aware that it was the voice of them that sing; but it doth not appear that he told Joshua what he knew of the occasion of their singing; for we should not be forward to proclaim mens faults, they will be known too soon.

3. The great and just displeasure of Moses against Israel, for their idolatry. Knowing what to expect, he was presently aware of the golden calf, and the sport the people made with it: he saw how merry they could be in his absence, how soon he was forgot among them, and what little thought they had of him, and his return. He might justly take this ill as an affront to himself, but that was the least part of the grievance; he resented it as an offence to God, and the scandal of his people. See what a change it is, to come down from the mount of communion with God, to converse with a world that lies in wickedness; in God we see nothing but what is pure and pleasant, in the world nothing but pollution and provocation. Moses was the meekest man on the earth, and yet when he saw the calf, and the dancing, his anger waxed hot. Note, It is no breach of the law of meekness to shew our displeasure at the wickedness of the wicked. Those are angry and sin not, that are angry at sin only, not as against themselves, but as against God. Ephesus is famous for patience, and yet cannot bear them which are evil, Rev. ii. 2. It becomes us to be cool in our own cause, but warm in God's. Moses shewed himself very angry, both by breaking the tables, and burning the calf, that he might by these expressions of a strong passion, awaken the people to a sense of the greatness of the sin they had been guilty of, which they would have been ready to make light of, if he had not thus shewed his resentments, as one in earnest for their conviction.

1. To convince them that they had forfeited and lost the favour of God, he broke the tables, ver. 19. Though God knew of their sin before Moses came down, yet he did not order him to leave the tables behind him, but gave them him to take down in his hand, that the people might see how forward God was to take them into covenant with himself, and that nothing but their own sin prevented it; but then put it into his heart, when the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered (as the expression is, Hos. vii. 1.) to break their tables before their eyes, as it is Deut. ix. 17. that the sight of it might the more affect them, and fill them with confusion, when they saw what blessings they had lost. Thus they being guilty of so notorious an infraction of the treaty now on foot, the writings were torn, then when they lay ready to be sealed. Note, The greatest sign of God's displeasure against any person or people, is his taking of his law from them. The breaking of the tables is the breaking of the staff of beauty and band; Zech. xi. 10, 14. it leaves a people uncircumcised, and undone. Some think Moses sinned in breaking the tables, and observe, that when men are angry they are in danger of breaking all God's commandments; but it rather seems to be an act of justice than of passion, and we do not find that he himself speaks of it afterwards, Deut. ix. 17. with any regret.

2. To convince them that they had betaken themselves to a God that could not help them, he burnt the calf, ver. 20. melted it down, and then filed it to dust, and that the powder to which it was reduced might be taken notice of throughout the camp, he strowed it upon that water which they all drank of. That it might appear that an idol is nothing in the world, 1 Cor. viii. 4. he reduced this to atoms, that it might be as near nothing as could be. And to shew that false gods cannot help their worshippers, he here shewed that this could not save it self, Isa. xlv. 1, 2. And to teach us that all the relics of idolatry ought to be abolished, and that the names of Baalim should be taken away, the very dust to which it was ground was scattered. Filings of gold are precious (we say) and therefore are carefully gathered up, but the filings of the golden calf were odious, and must be scattered with detestation. Thus the idols of silver and gold must be cast to the moles and the bats, Isa. ii. 20. xxx. 22. and Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? His mixing this powder with their drink, signified to them, that the curse they had thereby brought upon themselves would mingle it self with all their enjoyments, and embitter them; it would enter into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways; He shall drink as he brews. These were indeed waters of Marah.

21. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? 22. And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people that they are set on mischief. 23. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, No. VII.

the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 24. And I said unto them, Whosoever hath any gold, let them break it off: So they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. 25. And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame, amongst their enemies) 26. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. 27. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. 28. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. 29. For Moses had said, Consecrate your selves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother: that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

Moses having shewed his just indignation against the sin of Israel by breaking the tables, and burning the calf, he now proceeds to reckon with the sinners, and to call them to an account; herein acting as God's representative, who is not only a holy God, and hates sin, but a just God, and is engaged in honour to punish it, Isa. lix. 18. Now,

1. He begins with Aaron, as God began with Adam, because he was the principal person, though not first in the transgression, but drawn into it. Observe here,

(1.) The just reproof Moses gives him, ver. 21: He doth not order him to be cut off, as those ver. 27. that had been the ring-leaders in the sin. Note, A great deal of difference will be made between those that presumptuously rush into sin, and those that through infirmity are surprised into it; between those that overtake the fault that flees from them, and those that are overtaken in the fault they flee from, see Gal. vi. 1. Not but that Aaron deserved to have been cut off for this sin, and had been so if Moses had not interceded particularly for him, as appears Deut. ix. 20. And having prevailed with God for him to save him from ruin, he here expostulates with him to bring him to repentance. He puts Aaron upon considering, 1. what he had done to this people; Thou hast brought so great a sin upon them. The sin of idolatry is a great sin, so great a sin as cannot be expressed; the people, as the first movers, might be said to bring the sin upon Aaron; but he being a magistrate who should have suppressed, and yet aiding and abetting in it, might truly be said to bring it upon them, because he hardened their hearts, and strengthened their hands in it. It is an ill thing for governors to humour people in their sins, and give countenance to that to which they should be a terror. Observe in general, Those that bring sin upon others either by drawing them into it, or encouraging them in it, do more mischief than they are aware of; we really hate those whom we either bring or suffer sin upon, Lev. xix. 17. Those that share in sin help to break their partners, and really ruin one another. 2. What moved him to it; What did this people unto thee? He takes it for granted that it must needs be something more than ordinary that prevailed with Aaron to do such a thing, so insinuating an excuse for him, because he knew that his heart was upright; what did they? Did they speak thee fair, and wheedle thee into it; and durst thou displease thy God to please the people? Did they overcome thee by importunity, and hadst thou so little resolution left as to yield to the stream of a popular clamour? Did they threaten to stone thee! and couldst not thou have opposed God's threatnings to theirs, and frighten them worse than they could frighten thee: Note, We must never be drawn into sin by any thing that man can say or do unto us, for it will not justify us, to say that we were so drawn in: Men can but tempt us to sin, they cannot force us; Men can but frighten us if we do not comply, they cannot hurt us.

(2.) The frivolous excuse Aaron makes for himself: We will hope he testified his repentance for the sin afterwards better than he did now, for what he saith here hath little in it of the language of a penitent. If a just man fall, he shall rise again, but perhaps not quickly. 1. He deprecates the anger of Moses only; whereas he should have deprecated God's anger in the first place, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot, ver. 22. 2. He lays all the fault upon the people, they are set on mischief, and they said, Make us gods: It is natural to us to endeavour thus to transfer our guilt; we have it by kind, Adam and Eve did so; sin is a brat that no body is willing to own. Aaron was now the chief magistrate, and had power over the people; and yet pleads that the people overpowered him: he that had authority to restrain them, yet had so little resolution as to yield to them. 3. It is well if he did not intend a reflection upon Moses, as accessory to the sin, by staying so long on the mount, in repeating without



need that invidious surmise of the peoples, *As for this Moses, we wot not what is become of him*, ver. 23. 4. He extenuates and conceals his own share in the sin, as if he had only bid them *break off their gold* that they had about them, intending to make an hasty essay for the present, and to try what he could make of the gold that was next hand: and childishly insinuates, that when he cast the gold into the fire, it came out either by accident, or by the magick art of some of the mixed multitude (as the Jewish writers dream) in this shape; but not a word of his graving and fashioning it, ver. 24. But Moses relates to all ages what he did, ver. 4. though he himself here would not own it. Note, *He that covers his sin shall not prosper*, for sooner or later it will be discovered. Well, this was all Aaron had to say for himself; and he had better have said nothing, for his defence did but aggravate his offence, and yet he is not only spared, but preferred; as sin did abound, grace did much more abound.

2. The people are next to be judged for this sin. The approach of Moses soon spoiled their sport, and turned their dancing into trembling. They that hectored Aaron into a compliance with them in their sin, durst not look Moses in the face, nor make the least opposition to the severity which he thought fit to use both against the idol and against the idolaters. Note, It is not impossible to make those sins and sinners sneak, that are most insolent and daring: *The king that sits upon the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with his eyes*. Observe two things:

1. How they were exposed to shame by their sin; *the people were naked*, ver. 25. not so much because they had some of them lost their ear-rings, that was inconsiderable, but because they had lost their integrity, and lay under the reproach of ingratitude to their best benefactor, and a treacherous revolt from their rightful Lord: It was a shame to them, and a perpetual blot, that they *changed their glory into the similitude of an ox*. Other nations boasted that they were true to their false gods, well may Israel blush for being false to the true God. Thus were they *made naked*, stripped of their ornaments, and liable to contempt, stripped of their armour, and liable to insults. Thus our first parents, when they had sinned, became *naked to their shame*. Note, Those that do dishonour to God, really bring the greatest dishonour upon themselves: so Israel here did, and Moses was concerned to see it, though they themselves were not; he *saw that they were naked*.

2. The course that Moses took to roll away this reproach, not by concealing the sin, or putting any false colour upon it, but by punishing it, and so bearing a publick testimony against it; whenever it should be cast in their teeth that they had *made a calf in Horeb*, they might have this to say in answer to them that reproached them, that though it was true there were those that did so, yet justice was executed upon them. The government disallowed the sin, and suffered not the sinners to go unpunished: They did so, but they paid dear for it. Thus (saith God) thou shalt *put the evil away*, Deut. xiii. 5. Observe here,

1. By whom vengeance was taken; by the children of Levi, ver. 26, 28. not by the immediate hand of God himself, as on Nadab and Abihu, but by the sword of man, to teach them, that idolatry was an *iniquity to be punished by the judge*, being a *denial of the God that is above*, Job xxxi. 28. Deut. xiii. 9. It was to be done by the sword of their own brethren, that the execution of justice might redound more to the honour of the nation. And if they must fall now into the hands of man, better so than flee before their enemies. The innocent must be culled out to be the executioners of the guilty, that it might be the more effectual warning to themselves, that they did not the like another time; and the putting of them upon such an unpleasant service, and so much against the grain as this must needs be, to kill their next neighbours, was a punishment to them too for not appearing sooner to prevent the sin, and make head against it. The Levites particularly were employed in doing this execution, for it should seem there were more of them than of any other tribe, that had kept themselves free from the contagion, which was the more laudable, because Aaron, the head of their tribe, was so deeply concerned in it. Now here we are told, 1. How the Levites were called out to this service; *Moses stood in the gate of the camp*, the place of judgment, there he *displayed a banner*, as it were because of the truth, to list soldiers for God. He proclaimed, *Who is on the Lord's side?* The idolaters had set up the golden calf for their standard, and now Moses sets up his in opposition to them. Now *Moses clad himself with zeal* as with a robe, summons all those to appear forthwith that were on God's side against the golden calf: He doth not proclaim as Jehu, *Who is on my side?* 2 Kings ix. 32. to avenge the iniquity done to me, but *Who is on the Lord's side?* It was God's cause that he espoused *against the evil-doers*. Psal. xciv. 16. Note, (1.) There are two great interests on foot in the world, with the one or the other of which all the children of men are siding: The interest of sin and wickedness is the devil's interest, and all wicked people side with that interest; the interest of truth and holiness is God's interest, with which all godly people side; and it is a case that will not admit a neutrality. (2.) It concerns us all to enquire whether we be on the Lord's side or no. (3.) Those who

are on his side are comparatively but few, and sometimes seem fewer than really they are. (4.) God doth sometimes call out those that are on his side to appear for him, as witnesses, as soldiers, as intercessors. 2. How they were commissioned for this service; ver. 27. *Slay every man his brother*, i. e. slay all those that you know to have been active for the making and worshipping of the golden calf, though they were your own nearest relations, or dearest friends. The crime was committed publicly, the Levites saw who of their acquaintance were concerned in it, and therefore needed no other direction but their own knowledge, whom to slay. And probably the greatest part of those that were guilty, were known, and known to be so, to some or other of the Levites who were employed in the execution. Yet it should seem they were to slay those only whom they found *abroad in the streets* of the camp, for it might be hoped that those who were retired into their tents were ashamed of what they had done, and were upon their knees repenting. Those are marked for ruin who persist in sin, and are *not ashamed of the abominations they have committed*, Jer. ii. 15. But how durst the Levites encounter so great a body, who probably were much enraged by the burning of their calf? It is easy to account for this; sense of guilt disheartened the delinquents, and a divine commission animated the executioners. And one thing that put life into them, was that Moses had said, *Consecrate your selves to day to the Lord, that he may bestow a blessing upon you*; thereby intimating to them, that they now stood fair for preferment, and if they would but signalize themselves upon this occasion, it would be construed such a *Consecration of themselves* to God, and to his service, as would put upon their tribe a perpetual honour. Those that *consecrate themselves* to the Lord, he will set apart for himself. Those that do the duty, shall have the dignity; and if we do signal services for God, he will bestow special blessings upon us. There was a blessing designed for the tribe of Levi; now saith Moses, *Consecrate your selves to the Lord*, that you may qualify your selves to receive that blessing. The Levites were to assist in the offering of sacrifice to God, and now they must begin with the offering of these sacrifices to the honour of divine justice. Those that are to minister about holy things must be not only sincere and serious, but warm and zealous, bold and courageous for God and godliness. Thus all christians, but especially ministers, must *forsake father and mother*, and prefer the service of Christ and his interest far before their nearest and dearest relations, whom if we *love better than Christ* we are not *worthy of him*: See how this zeal of the Levites is applauded, Deut. xxxiii. 9.

2. On whom vengeance is taken; *There fell of the people that day about three thousand men*, ver. 28. Probably these were but few in comparison with the many that were guilty, but these were the men that headed the rebellion, and were therefore picked out to be made examples of, for terror to all others. They that in the morning were shouting and dancing, before night were dying in their own blood, such a sudden change do the judgments of God sometimes make with sinners that are secure and jovial in their sin, as with Belshazzar by the hand-writing upon the wall. This is written for warning to us; 1 Cor. x. 7. *Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them*.

30. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. 31. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32. Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin: and if not, blot me I pray thee out of thy book which thou hast written. 33. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: Behold, mine angel shall go before thee: nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Moses having executed justice upon the principal offenders, is here dealing both with the people, and with God.

1. With the people, to bring them to repentance, ver. 30. When some were slain, lest the rest should imagine that because they were exempt from the capital punishment, they were therefore looked upon as free from guilt, Moses here tells the survivors, *Ye have sinned a great sin*, and therefore though you have escaped this time, *Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*. That they might not think lightly of the sin it self, he calls it a great sin; and that they might not think themselves innocent, because perhaps they were not all so deeply guilty as some of them that were put to death, he tells them all, *Ye have sinned a great sin*. The work of ministers is to shew people their sins, and the greatness of their sins; *you have sinned*, and therefore you are undone



done if your sins be not pardoned, for ever undone without a Saviour: It is a great sin, and therefore calls for great sorrow, for it puts you in great danger. To affect them with the greatness of their sin, he intimates to them what a difficult thing it would be to take up the quarrel which God had with them for it. (1.) It would not be done, unless he himself *go up unto the Lord* on purpose, and give as long and as solemn attendance as he had done for the receiving of the law. And yet, (2.) even so it was but a peradventure that he should make atonement for them; the case was extremely hazardous. This should convince us of the great evil there is in sin, that he who undertook to make atonement, found it no easy thing to do it; he must *go up to the Lord* with his own blood to *make atonement*. The malignity of sin appears in the price of pardons.

Yet it was some encouragement to the people, when they were told that they had *sinned a great sin*, to hear that Moses, who had so great an interest in heaven, and so true an affection for them, would *go up unto the Lord to make atonement* for them. Consolation should go along with conviction: first wound and then heal; shew people first the greatness of their sin, and then make known to them the atonement, and give them hopes of mercy. *Moses will go up unto the Lord*, though it be but a peradventure that he should make atonement: Christ, the great mediator, went upon greater certainty than this, for he had lain in the bosom of the Father, and perfectly knew all his counsels. But to us poor suppliants it is encouragement enough in prayer for particular mercies, that peradventure we may obtain them, though we have not an absolute promise, *Zeph. ii. 3. It may be ye shall be hid*. In our prayers for others we should be humbly earnest with God, though it is but a *peradventure that God will give them repentance*, 2 Tim. ii. 25.

2. He intercedes with God for mercy; wherein observe,  
1. How pathological his address was. *Moses returned unto the Lord*, not to receive further instructions about the tabernacle, there were no more conferences now about that matter. Thus mens sins and follies make work for their friends and ministers, unpleasant work many times, and give great interruptions to that work which they delight in. Moses in this address expresseth,

(1.) His great detestation of the peoples sin, *ver. 31*. He speaks as one overwhelmed with the horror of it, *Oh! this people have sinned a great sin*. God had first told him of it, *ver. 7*. and now he tells God of it by way of lamentation. He doth not call them God's people, he knew they were unworthy to be called so; but *this people*, this treacherous ungrateful people, they have *made them gods of gold*: It is a great sin indeed to make gold our god; as they do that make it their hope, and set their heart on it. He doth not go about to excuse or extenuate the sin, but what he had said to them by way of conviction, he saith to God by way of confession, they *have sinned a great sin*; he came not to make apologies, but to make atonement; Lord, pardon the sin, *for it is great*, *Psal. xxv. 11*.

(2.) His great desire of the people's welfare, *ver. 32*. *Yet now it is not too great a sin for infinite mercy to pardon*, and therefore *if thou wilt forgive their sin*; what then, Moses? It is an abrupt expression, *if thou wilt*, I desire no more; *if thou wilt*, thou wilt be praised, I shall be pleased, and abundantly recompensed for my intercession. It is an expression like that of the dresser of the vineyard, *Luke xiii. 9. If it bear fruit*: or, *If thou wilt forgive*, is as much as, O that thou wouldst forgive! as *Luke xix. 41. If thou hadst known*, is, O that thou hadst known.

But if not, if the decree be gone forth, and there is no remedy, but they must be ruined, if *sufficient unto them* be not *this punishment which has already been inflicted by many*, (2 Cor. ii. 6.) but they must all be cut off, *blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written*, i. e. If they must be cut off, let me be cut off with them, and cut short of Canaan; if all Israel must perish, I am content to perish with them; let not the land of promise be mine by survivorship. This expression may be illustrated from *Ezek. xiii. 9*. where this is threatened against the false prophets, *they shall not be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel*; God had told Moses, if he would not interpose, he would make of him a *great nation*, *ver. 10*. No, saith Moses, I am so far from desiring to see my name and family built upon the ruins of Israel, that I will choose rather to sink with them. If I cannot prevent their destruction, let me not see it, (*Numb. xi. 15*.) let me not be *written among the living*, *Isa. iv. 3*. nor among those that are marked for preservation, even let me die in the last ditch. Thus he expresseth his tender affection for the people, and is a type of the good shepherd that *lays down his life for the sheep*, *John x. 11*. who was to be *cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people*, *Isa. liii. 8*. *Dan. ix. 26*. He is also an example of publick-spiritedness to all, especially to those in publick stations. All private interests must be postponed to the good and welfare of communities. The matter is not great what comes of us and our families in this world, so as it go well with the church of God, and there be peace upon Israel. Moses thus importunes for a pardon, and wrestles with God; not prescribing to him, if thou wilt not forgive thou art either unjust or unkind; no, he is far from that, but if not, let me die with the Israelites, and the will of the Lord be done.

2. Observe how prevalent his address was; God would not take him at his word, no, he will not blot any out of his book, but those that by their wilful disobedience have forfeited the honour of being enrolled in it, *ver. 33*. the soul that sins shall die, and not the innocent for the guilty. This was also an intimation of mercy to the people, that they should not all be destroyed in a body, but those only that had a hand in the sin. Thus Moses gets ground by degrees. God would not at first give him full assurances of his being reconciled to them, lest if the comfort of a pardon were too easily obtained, they should be emboldened to do the like again, and should not be made sensible enough of the evil of the sin. Comforts are suspended, that convictions may be the deeper impressed: also God would hereby exercise the faith and zeal of Moses their great intercessor. Further in answer to the address of Moses, 1. God promiseth to go on with his kind intention of giving them the land of Canaan, for all this, the land he had *spoken to them of*, *ver. 34*. Therefore he sends Moses back to them to lead them, though they were unworthy of him, and promiseth that his angel should go before them, some created angel that was employed in the common services of the kingdom of providence, which intimated, that they were not to expect any thing for the future to be done for them out of the common road of providence, nor any thing extraordinary. Moses afterwards obtained a promise of God's special presence with them, *chap. xxxiii. 14, 17*. but at present this was all he could prevail for. 2. Yet he threatens to remember this sin against them, when hereafter he should see cause to punish them for other sins, *when I visit, I will visit for this among the rest*. Next time I take the rod in hand, they shall have one stripe the more for this. From hence the Jews have a saying, that from henceforward no judgment fell upon Israel, but there was in it an ounce of the powder of the golden calf. I see no ground in scripture for the opinion some are of, that God would not have burdened them with such a multitude of sacrifices and other ceremonial institutions, if they had not provoked him by worshipping the golden calf: On the contrary, St. Stephen saith, that when they *made a calf, and offered sacrifice to the idol, God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven*, *Acts vii. 41, 42*. so that the strange addictedness of that people to the sin of idolatry, was a just judgment upon them for making and worshipping the golden calf, and a judgment they were never quite freed from till the captivity in Babylon: see *Rom. i. 24*. Note, Many that are not presently cut off in their sins, are reserved for a further day of reckoning: vengeance is slow, but sure. At the present *the Lord plagued the people*, *ver. 35*. probably by the pestilence, or some other infectious disease, which was a messenger of God's wrath, and an earnest of worse: Aaron made the calf, and yet it is said the people made it, because they worshipped it: *Deos qui rogat ille facit*. Aaron was not plagued, but the people; for his was a sin of infirmity, theirs a presumptuous sin, between which there is a great difference, not always discernible to us, but evident to God, whose judgment therefore we are sure is according to truth. Thus Moses prevailed for a reprieve, and a mitigation of the punishment, but could not wholly turn away the wrath of God; which (some think) speaks the impossibility of the law of Moses to reconcile men to God, and to perfect our peace with him. That was reserv'd for Christ to do, in whom alone it is that God so pardons sin, as to *remember it no more*.

### C H A P. XXXIII.

In this chapter we have a further account of the mediation of Moses between God and Israel, for the making up of the breach that sin had made between them. 1. He brings a very humbling message from God to them, *ver. 1, 2, 3, 5*. which has a good effect upon them, and helps to prepare them for mercy, *ver. 4, 6*. 2. He settles a correspondence between God and them, and both God and the people signify their approbation of that correspondence; God, by descending in a cloudy pillar, and the people, by worshipping at the tent-doors, *ver. 7—12*. 3. He is earnest with God in prayer, and prevails. 1. For a promise of his presence with the people, *ver. 12—17*. 2. For a sight of his glory for himself, *ver. 18—23*.

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: 2. And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: 3. Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way. 4. And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments. 5. For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, ye are a stiff-necked people: I will come up into the midst of thee



thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. 6. And the children of Israel stript themselves of their ornaments, by the mount Horeb.

Here is, 1. The message which God sent by Moses to the children of Israel, signifying the continuance of the displeasure against them, and the ill terms they yet stood upon with God. This he must let them know for their further mortification. 1. He puts them into an ill name, by giving them their just character, for a *stiff-necked people*, ver. 3, 6. Go, saith God to Moses, go tell them that they are so. He that knows them better than they know themselves saith so of them. God would have brought them under the yoke of his law, and into the bond of his covenant, but their necks were too stiff to bow to them. God would have cured them of their corrupt and crooked dispositions, and have set them straight; but they were wilful and obstinate, and hated to be reformed, and would not have God to reign over them. Note, God judgeth of men by the temper of their minds. We know what man doth, God knows what he is; we know what proceeds from man, God knows what is in man: and nothing is more displeasing to him than stiff-neckedness; as nothing in children is more offensive to their parents and teachers, than stubbornness. 2. He tells them what they deserved, that he should *come into the midst of them in a moment, and consume them*, ver. 5. Had he dealt with them according to their sins, he had taken them away with a swift destruction. Note, Those whom God pardons must be made to know what their sin deserved, and how miserable they had been if they had been unpardoned, that God's mercy may be the more magnified. 3. He bids them *depart, and go up hence* to the land of Canaan, ver. 1. This mount Sinai, where they now were, was the place appointed for the setting up of God's tabernacle, and solemn worship among them, this was not yet done, so that in bidding them depart hence, God intimates that it should not be done; let them go forward as they are. And so it was very expressive of God's displeasure. 4. He turns them over to Moses, as the people which *he had brought up out of the land of Egypt*, and leaves it to him to lead them to Canaan. 5. Though he promiseth to make good his covenant with Abraham in giving them Canaan, yet he denies them the extraordinary tokens of his presence, such as they had hitherto been blessed with, and leaves them under the common conduct of Moses their prince, and the common convoy of a guardian angel. *I will send an angel before thee*, for thy protector, otherwise the evil angels would soon destroy thee; but *I will not go up in the midst of thee, lest I consume thee*, ver. 2, 3. not as if an angel would be more patient and compassionate than God, but their affronts given to an angel would not be so provoking, as those given to the Shechinah, or divine Majesty itself. Note, The greater privileges we enjoy, the greater is our danger if we do not improve them, and live up to them. 6. He speaks as one that were at a loss what course to take with them. Justice said, Cut them off, and consume them; mercy said, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?* Hos. xi. 8. Well, saith God, *put off thine ornaments, that I may know what to do with thee*, i. e. put thyself into the posture of a penitent, that the dispute may be determined in thy favour, and mercy may rejoice against judgment, ver. 5. Note, Calls to repentance are plain indications of mercy designed. If the Lord were pleased to kill us, justice knows what to do with a stiff-necked people; but God has no pleasure in the death of them that die, let them return and repent, and then mercy, which otherwise is at a loss, knows what to do.

2. The peoples melancholy reception of this message; it was *evil tidings* to them, to hear that they should not have God's special presence with them, and therefore, (1.) *they mourned*, ver. 4. mourned for their sin which had provoked God to withdraw from them, and mourned for this as the forest punishment of their sin. When three thousand of them were at one time laid dead upon the spot by the Levites sword, we do not find that they mourned for that, hoping that would help to expiate the guilt; but when God denied them his favourable presence, then they mourned and were in bitterness. Note, Of all the bitter fruits and consequences of sin, that which true penitents most lament, and dread most, is God's departure from them. God had promised, that notwithstanding their sin, he would give them the *land flowing with milk and honey*. But they could have small joy of that, if they had not God's presence with them. Canaan it self would be no pleasant land without that, therefore if they want that they mourn. (2.) In token of great shame and humiliation; they that were undressed did *not put on their ornaments*, ver. 4. and they that were dressed, *stript themselves of their ornaments, by the mount*; or, as some read it, *at a distance from the mount*, ver. 6. standing afar off like the publican, Luke xviii. 13. God bid them *lay aside their ornaments*, ver. 5. and they did so. Both to shew in general their deep mourning, and in particular to take a holy revenge upon themselves, for giving their ear-rings to make the golden calf of. They that would part with their ornaments for the maintenance of their sin, could do no less than lay aside their ornaments, in token of their sorrow and shame for it. When the Lord God calls to weeping and mourning, we must comply

with the call, and not only fast from pleasant bread, Dan. x. 3. but lay aside our ornaments; even those that are decent enough at other times, are unseasonably worn on days of humiliation, or in times of publick calamity, Isa. iii. 18.

7. And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation: and it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. 8. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses until he was gone into the tabernacle. 9. And it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. 10. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. 11. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Here is, 1. One mark of displeasure put upon them, for their further humiliation. *Moses took the tabernacle*, not his own tent for his family, but the tent wherein he gave audience, heard causes, and enquired of God, the *guild-hall* as it were of their camp, and *pitched it without, afar off their camp*, ver. 7. to signify to them that they had rendered themselves unworthy of it, and that unless peace was made, it would return to them no more. God would thus let them know that he was fallen out with them; *The Lord is far from the wicked*. Thus the glory of the Lord departed from the temple, when it was polluted with sin, Ezek. x. 4. xi. 23. Note, It is a sign God is angry, when he removes his tabernacle, for his ordinances are fruits of his favour, and tokens of his presence; while we have them with us, we have him with us. Perhaps this tabernacle was a plan, or model rather, of the tabernacle that was afterwards to be erected, a hasty draught from the pattern shewed him in the mount, designed for direction to the workman, and used in the mean time as a *tabernacle of meeting* between God and Moses about publick affairs. This was set up at a distance, to affect the people with the loss of that glorious structure, which, if they had not forsaken their own mercies for lying vanities, was to have been set up in the midst of them. Let them see what they had forfeited.

2. Many encouragements given them notwithstanding to hope that God would yet be reconciled to them.

(1.) Though the tabernacle was removed, yet every one that was disposed to seek the Lord, was welcome to follow it, ver. 7. Private persons, as well as Moses, were invited and encouraged to apply themselves to God as intercessors upon this occasion. A place was appointed for them to go to *without the camp*, to solicit God's return to them. Thus when Ezra (a second Moses) interceded for Israel, there were assembled to him many that *trembled at God's word*, Ezra ix. 4. When God designs mercy, he stirs up prayer. *He will be sought unto*, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. and thanks be to his name he may be sought unto, and will not reject the poorest intercession. Every Israelite that sought the Lord was welcome to this tabernacle, as well as Moses the man of God.

(2.) Moses undertook to mediate between God and Israel, *He went out to the tabernacle*, the place of treaty, probably pitched between them and the mount, ver. 8. and he *entred into the tabernacle*, ver. 9. That cause could not but speed well which had so good a manager, when their judge (under God) becomes their advocate, and he who was appointed to be their law-giver is an intercessor for them, there is *hope in Israel concerning this thing*.

(3.) The people seemed to be in a very good mind, and well-disposed towards a reconciliation, (1.) When Moses went out to go to the tabernacle, the people *looked after him*, ver. 8. in token of their respects to him whom before they had slighted, and their entire dependance upon his mediation. By this it appeared that they were very solicitous about this matter, desirous to be at peace with God, and full of concern what would be the issue. Thus the disciples *looked after* our Lord Jesus, when he ascended on high to enter into the holy place not made with hands, till a *cloud received him out of their sight*, as Moses here; And we must with an eye of faith follow him likewise thither, where he is appearing in the presence of God for us, then shall we have the benefit of his mediation. (2.) When they saw the cloudy pillar, that symbol of God's presence, give Moses the meeting, they all *worshipped, every man at his tent door*, ver. 10. Thereby they signified, 1. Their humble adoration of the divine Majesty which they will ever worship, and not *gods of gold* any more. 2. Their joyful thankfulness to God, that he was pleas-



ed to shew them this token for good, and give them hopes of a reconciliation, for if he had been pleased to kill them, he would not have shewed him such things as these, would not have raised them up such a mediator, nor given him such countenance. 3. Their hearty concurrence with Moses as their advocate, in every thing he should promise for them, and their expectation of a comfortable and happy issue of this treaty. Thus must we worship God in our tents with an eye to Christ as the mediator. Their worshipping in their tent doors, declared plainly that they were not ashamed to own their respect to God and Moses, as they had openly worshipped the calf.

(4.) God was in Moses reconciling Israel to himself, and manifested himself very willing to be at peace.

1. God met Moses at the place of treaty, *ver. 9.* The cloudy pillar which had withdrawn it self from the camp when it was polluted with idolatry, now returned to this tabernacle at some distance, coming back gradually. If our hearts go forth towards God to meet him, he will graciously come down to meet us.

2. God talked with Moses, *ver. 9. spake to him face to face, as a man speaks to his friend, ver. 11.* which intimates not only that God revealed himself to Moses with greater clearness and evidence of divine light than to any other of the prophets, but also with greater expressions of particular kindness and grace than to any other. He spake not as a prince to a subject, but as a man to his friend, whom he loves, and with whom he takes sweet counsel. This was great encouragement to Israel, to see their advocate so great a favourite; and that they might be encouraged by it, *Moses turned again into the camp,* to tell the people what hopes he had of bringing this business to a good issue, and that they might not despair if he should be long absent. But because he intended speedily to return to the tabernacle of the congregation, he left Joshua there, for it was not fit the place should be empty, so long as the cloud of glory stood at the door, *ver. 9.* but if God had any thing to say out of that cloud while Moses was absent, Joshua was there ready to hear it.

12. And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. 13. Now therefore, I pray thee, If I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people. 14. And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. 15. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence. 16. For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth. 17. And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. 18. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. 19. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. 20. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. 21. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. 22. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock; and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by. 23. And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts: but my face shall not be seen.

Moses is now returned to the door of the tabernacle, and there is a humble and importunate suppliant for two very great favours, and as a prince he has power with God, and prevails for both: herein he was a type of Christ the great intercessor, *whom the Father heareth always.*

1. He is here very earnest with God for a grant of his presence with Israel in the rest of their march to Canaan, notwithstanding their provocations. The people had by their sin deserved the wrath of God, and for the turning away of that, Moses had already prevailed, *chap. xxxii. 14.* But they had likewise forfeited God's favourable presence, and all the benefit and comfort of that, and this Moses is here begging for the return of: Thus by the intercession of Christ, we obtain not only the removal of the curse, but an assurance of the blessing; we are not only saved from ruin, but become entitled to everlasting Happiness.

Observe how admirably Moses orders this cause before God, and fills his mouth with arguments. What a value he expresseth for God's favour, what a concern for God's glory, and the welfare of Israel. How he pleads, and how he speeds.

(1.) How he pleads. 1. He insists upon the commission God had given him to bring up this people, *ver. 12.* This he begins with. Lord, it is thou thy self that employest me, and wilt thou not own me? I am in the way of my duty, and shall I not have thy presence with me in that way? Whom God calls out to any service, he will be sure to furnish with necessary assistances: Now, Lord, thou hast ordered me a great piece of work, and yet left me at a loss how to go about it, and go through with it. Note, Those that sincerely design and endeavour to do their duty, may in faith beg of God direction and strength for the doing of it. 2. He improves the interest he himself had with God, and pleads God's gracious expressions of kindness to him. *Thou hast said I know thee by name,* as a particular friend and confident, *and thou hast also found grace in my sight,* above any other. Now therefore, saith Moses, if it be indeed so, that I have found grace in thy sight, shew me thy way, *ver. 13.* What favour God had expressed to the people, they had forfeited the benefit of, there was no insisting upon that, and therefore Moses lays the stress of his plea upon what God had said to him, which though he owns himself unworthy of, yet he hopes he has not thrown himself out of the benefit of. By this therefore he takes hold on God; Lord, if ever thou wilt do any thing for me, do this for the people. Thus our Lord Jesus in his intercession, presents himself to the Father, as one in whom he is always well pleased, and so obtains mercy for us, with whom he is justly displeased; and we are accepted in the beloved. Thus also publick spirits love to improve their interest both with God and man for the publick good. Observe what it is he is thus earnest for, *Shew me thy way,* that I may know that I find grace in thy sight. Note, A divine conduct is one of the best evidences of divine favour. By this we may know that we find grace in God's sight, if we find grace in our hearts to guide and quicken us in the way of our duty. God's good work in us is the surest discovery of his good will towards us. 3. He insinuates that the people also, though most unworthy, yet were in some relation to God, and consider that this nation is thy people, a people that thou hast done great things for, redeemed to thy self, and taken into covenant with thy self, Lord, they are thy own, do not leave them. The offended father considers this, my child is foolish and froward, but he is my child, and I cannot abandon him. 4. He expresseth the great value he had for the presence of God. When God said, *My presence shall go with thee,* he caught at that word, as that which he could not live and move without; *ver. 15. If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* He speaks as one that dreaded the thought of going forward without God's presence, knowing their marches could not be safe, nor their encampments easy, if they had not God with them. Better lie down and die here in the wilderness, than go forward to Canaan, without God's presence. Note, Those who know how to value God's favours are best prepared to receive them. Observe, How earnest Moses is in this matter, he begs as one that would take no denial. Here we will stay till we obtain thy favour; like Jacob, *I will not let thee go except thou blest me.* And observe how he grows upon God's concessions, and the kind intimations given him, make him yet more importunate. Thus God's gracious promises, and the advances of mercy towards us should not only encourage our faith, but excite our fervency in prayer. 5. He concludes with an argument taken from God's glory; *ver. 16. Wherein shall it be known to the nations that have their eyes upon us, that I, and thy people with whom I have twisted interests, have found grace in thy sight,* distinguishing favour, so as to be separated from all people upon earth? how will it appear that we are indeed thus honoured, *Is it not in that thou goest with us?* Nothing short of that can answer these characters: Let it never be said that we are a peculiar people, and highly favoured, for we stand but upon a level with the rest of our neighbours, unless thou go with us: sending an angel with us will not serve. He lays a stress upon the place, here in this wilderness, whither thou hast led us, and where we are certainly lost if thou leave us. Note, God's special presence with us here in this wilderness, by his Spirit and grace, to direct, defend, and comfort us, is the surest pledge of his special love to us, and will redound to his glory as well as our benefit.

(2.) Observe how he speeds. He obtained an assurance of God's favour, 1. To himself, *ver. 14. I will give thee rest,* I will take care to make thee easy in this matter, however it be, thou shalt have satisfaction. Moses never entered Canaan, and yet God made good his word, that he would give him rest, *Dan. xii. 13.* 2. To the people for his sake: Moses was not content with that answer, which only spoke favour to himself, he must gain a promise, an express promise for the people too, or he is not at rest; gracious, generous souls think it not enough to get to heaven themselves, but would have all their friends thither too. And in this also Moses prevailed, *ver. 17. I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken.* Moses is not checked as an unreasonable beggar, whom no saying would serve, but he is encouraged; God grants as long as he asks; gives liberally, and doth not upbraid him. See the power of prayer, and be quickened hereby to ask, and seek, and knock, and to continue instant in prayer; to pray always,



always, and not to faint. See the riches of God's goodness: when he hath done much, yet he is willing to do more, *I will do this also*, above *what we are able to ask or think*. See in type the prevalency of Christ's intercession, which he *ever lives to make* for all those that come to God by him, and the ground of that prevalency; it is purely his own merit, not any thing in those for whom he intercedes, it is because *thou hast found grace in my sight*. And now the matter is settled, God is perfectly reconciled to them, his presence in the pillar of cloud returns to them, and shall continue with them, all is well again, and from henceforth we hear no more of the golden calf. *Lord, who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?*

2. Having gained this point, he next begs a sight of God's glory, and is heard in that matter also. Observe,

1. The humble request Moses makes, ver. 18. *I beseech thee shew me thy glory*. Moses had lately been in the mount with God, had continued there a great while, and had had as intimate communion with God as ever any man had on this side heaven, and yet he is still desiring a further acquaintance; all that are effectually called into the knowledge of God, and fellowship with him, though they desire nothing *more than God*, yet they are still coveting more and more of him, till they come to see as they are seen. Moses had wonderfully prevailed with God for one favour after another, and the success of his prayers emboldened him to go on still to seek God, the more he had, the more he asked; When we are in a good frame at the throne of grace, we should endeavour to preserve and improve it, and strike while the iron is hot. *Shew me thy glory: Make me to see it*; so the word is: Make it some way or other visible, and enable me to bear the sight of it. Not that he was so ignorant as to think God's essence could be seen with bodily eyes, but having hitherto only heard a voice out of a pillar or cloud of fire, he desired to see some representation of the divine glory, such as God saw fit to gratify him with. It was not fit the people should see any similitude when the Lord spoke unto them, *lest they should corrupt themselves*, but he hoped there was not that danger in his seeing some similitude. Something it was more than he had yet seen, that Moses desired: if it was purely for the assisting of his faith and devotion, the desire was commendable; but perhaps there was in it a mixture of human infirmity. God will have us walk by faith, not by sight in this world, and *faith comes by hearing*. Some think Moses desired a sight of God's glory as a token of his reconciliation, and an earnest of that presence he had promised them; but he *knew not what he asked*.

2. The gracious reply God made to this request.

(1.) He denied that which was not fit to be granted, and which Moses could not bear, ver. 20. *Thou canst not see my face*. A full discovery of the glory of God, would quite overpower the faculties of any mortal man in this present state, and overwhelm him, even Moses himself. Man is mean and unworthy of it, weak and could not bear it, guilty and could not but dread it. It is in compassion to our infirmity, that God *holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth a cloud upon it*, Job xxvi. 9. God hath said, here his *face shall not be seen*, ver. 23. in this world; that is an honour reserved for the future state, to be the eternal bliss of holy souls; should men in this state know what it is, they would not be content to live short of it. There is a knowledge and enjoyment of God, which must be waited for in another world, when we shall *see him as he is*, 1 Joh. iii. 2. in the mean time, let us adore *the height of what we do know* of God, and *the depth of what we do not*. Long before this, Jacob had spoken of it with wonder that he had *seen God face to face*, and yet *his life was preserved*, Gen. xxxii. 30. Sinful man dreads the sight of God his judge, but holy souls being *by the Spirit of the Lord changed into the same image, behold with open face the glory of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(2.) He granted that which would be abundantly satisfying.

1. He should hear what would please him, ver. 19. *I will make all my goodness pass before thee*; he had given him wonderful instances of his goodness in being reconciled to Israel, but that was only goodness in the stream, he would shew him goodness in the spring; *all his goodness*. This was a sufficient answer to his request; *Shew me thy glory*, saith Moses; *I will shew thee my goodness*, saith God. Note, God's goodness is his glory; And he will have us to know him by the glory of his mercy, more than by the glory of his Majesty, for we must fear even *the Lord and his goodness*, Hos. iii. 5. That especially which is the glory of God's goodness is the sovereignty of it, that he will be *gracious to whom he will be gracious*; That as an absolute proprietor, he makes what difference he pleaseth in bestowing his gifts, and is not debtor to any, nor accountable to any; *May he not do what he will with his own?* Also, That all his reasons of mercy are fetched from within himself, not from any merit in his creatures; as he has mercy on whom he will, so because he will: *Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight*. It is never said, *I will be angry at whom I will be angry*, for his wrath is always just and holy; but *I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy*, for his grace is always free. He never damns by prerogative, but by prerogative he saves. The apostle quotes

this, Rom. ix. 15. in answer to those who charged God with unrighteousness in giving that grace freely to some, which he withholds justly from others.

2. He should see what he could bear, and would suffice him. The matter is concerted so as that Moses might be safe, and yet satisfied. (1.) Safe in a *cleft of the rock*, ver. 21, 22. in that he was to be sheltered from the dazzling light, and devouring fire of God's glory. This was the rock in Horeb, out of which water was brought, of which it is said, *That rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4. It is in the clefts of this rock, that we are secured from the wrath of God, which otherwise would consume us; God himself will protect those that are thus hid. And it is only *through Christ* that we have *the knowledge of the glory of God*. None can see that to their comfort, but those that *stand upon this rock*, and take shelter in it. (2.) He was satisfied with a sight of his back-parts, ver. 23. He should see more of God than any ever saw on earth, but not so much as they see that are in heaven. The face in man is the seat of majesty, and men are known by their faces, in them we take a full view of men; that sight of God Moses might not have; but such a sight as we have of a man who is gone past us, so that we only see his back, and have (as we say) a blush of him. We cannot be said to look at God, but rather to look after him, Gen. xvi. 13. for we see *through a glass darkly*; when we see what God has done in his works, observe *the goings of our God, our king*, we do as it were see his back-parts. The best thus *knows but in part*, and we cannot order our speech concerning God, by reason of darkness, no more than we can describe a man whose face we never saw. Now Moses was allowed to see only the back-parts, but long after, when he was a witness to Christ's transfiguration, he saw *his face shine as the sun*. If we faithfully improve the discoveries God gives us of himself while we are here, a brighter and more glorious scene will shortly be opened to us; for *to him that hath shall be given*.

#### C H A P. XXXIV.

God having in the foregoing chapter intimated to Moses his reconciliation to Israel, here gives proofs of it, proceeding to settle his covenant and communion with them. Four instances of the return of his favour we have in this chapter. 1. The orders he gives to Moses to come up to the mount, the next morning, and bring two tables of stone with him, ver. 1—4. 2. His meeting him there, and the proclamation of his name, ver. 6—9. 3. The instructions he gave him there, and his converse with him for forty days together, without intermission, ver. 10—28. 4. The honour he put upon him when he sent him down with his face shining, ver. 29—35. In all which God dealt with Moses as a publick person, and mediator between him and Israel, and a type of the great mediator.

1. **A**ND the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest. 2. And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thy self there to me, in the top of the mount. 3. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount: neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. 4. And he hewed two tables of stone, like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

The treaty that was on foot between God and Israel, being broke off abruptly by their worshipping the golden calf, when peace was made, all must be begun anew, not where they left off, but from the beginning. Thus back-sliders must repent and do their first works, Rev. ii. 5.

1. Moses must prepare for the renewing of the tables, ver. 1. Before, God himself provided the tables, and wrote on them, now Moses must *hew him out the tables*, and God would only write upon them. Thus in the first writing of the law upon the heart of man in innocency, both the tables and the writing were the work of God; but when those were broke and defaced by sin, and the divine law was to be preserved in the scriptures, God therein made use of the ministry of man, and Moses first. But the prophets and apostles did only hew the tables, as it were, the writing was God's still; for *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*. Observe, When God was reconciled to them, he ordered the tables to be renewed, and wrote his law in them; which plainly intimates to us, 1. That even under the gospel of peace and reconciliation by Christ (of which the intercession of Moses was typical) the moral law should continue to oblige believers. Though Christ has redeemed us from the *curse of the law*, yet not from the command of it, but still we are *under the law to Christ*; when our Saviour in his sermon on the mount expounded the moral law, and vindicated it from the corrupt glosses with which the Scribes and Pharisees



Pharisees had broken it, *Matt. v. 19.* he did in effect renew the tables, and make them like the first, *i. e.* reduce the law to its primitive sense and intention. 2. That the best evidence of the pardon of sin, and peace with God, is the writing of the law in the heart. The first token God gave of his reconciliation to Israel, was the renewing of the tables of the law; thus the first article of the new covenant is, *I will write my law in their heart*, Heb. viii. 10. and it follows, *ver. 12. for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness.* 3. That if we would have God to write the law in our hearts, we must prepare our hearts for the reception of it. The heart of stone must be hewn by conviction and humiliation for sin, *Hof. vi. 5. the superfluity of naughtiness must be taken off, Jam. i. 21.* the heart made smooth, and laboured with, that the word may have a place in it. Moses did accordingly hew out the tables of stone, or slate, for they were so slight and thin, that Moses carried them both in his hand; and for their dimensions, they must be somewhat less, and perhaps not much, than the ark, in which they were deposited; which was a yard and quarter long, and three quarters broad. It should seem there was no great curiosity in the framing of them, for there was no great time taken, Moses had them ready presently, to take up with him next morning. They were to receive their beauty, not from the art of man, but from the finger of God.

2. Moses must attend again on the top of mount Sinai, and present himself to God there, *ver. 2.* Though the absence of Moses, and his continuance so long on the mount, had lately occasioned their making the golden calf, yet God did not therefore alter his measures; but he shall come up and tarry as long as he had done, to try whether they had learned to wait. To strike an awe upon the people, they are bid to keep their distance, none must come up with him, *ver. 3.* They had said, *chap. xxxii. 1.* we know not what is become of him, and God will not let them know. Moses accordingly rose up early, *ver. 4.* to go to the place appointed; to shew how forward he was to present himself before God, and loth to lose time. It is good to be early at our devotions. The morning is perhaps as good a friend to the graces, as it is to the muses.

5. And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the childrens children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. 8. And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us (for it is a stiff-necked people) and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

No sooner was Moses got to the top of the mount, but God gave him the meeting; *ver. 5. the Lord descended*, by some sensible token of his presence, and manifestation of his glory. His descending speaks his condescending, he humbleth himself to take cognizance of those that humble themselves to walk with him, *Psal. cxliii. 6. Lord, what is man, that he should be thus visited?* He descended in the cloud, probably that pillar of cloud which had hitherto gone before Israel, and had the day before met Moses at the door of the tabernacle. This cloud was to strike an awe upon Moses, that the familiarity he was admitted to might not breed contempt. The disciples feared when they entered into the cloud. His making a cloud his pavilion, intimated, that though he made known much of himself, yet there was much more concealed.

Now observe, (1.) How God proclaimed his name, *ver. 6, 7.* he did it in transitu, passed by before him. Fixed views of God are reserved for the future state, the best we have in this world are transient. God now was performing what he had promised Moses the day before, that his glory should pass by, *Exod. xxxiii. 22.* He proclaimed the name of the Lord, by which he would make himself known. He had made himself known to Moses in the glory of his self-existence, and self-sufficiency, when he proclaimed that name, *I am that I am*; now he makes himself known in the glory of his grace and goodness, and all-sufficiency to us. Now God is about to publish a second edition of the law, he prefaceth it with this proclamation, for it is God's grace and goodness that gives the law, especially the remedial law. The pardon of Israel's sin in worshipping the calf was now to pass the seals, and God by this declaration would let them know that he pardoned *ex mero motu*, not for their merits sake, but from his own inclination to forgive. The proclaiming of it notes the universal extent of God's mercy; he is not only good to Israel, but good to all, let all take notice of it. He that hath an ear let him hear, and know, and believe.

1. That the God with whom we have to do is a great God. He is Jehovah, the Lord, that hath his being of himself, and is the fountain of all being, *Jehovah-El, the Lord; the strong God*, a God of almighty power himself, and the original of all power. This is prefixed before the display of his mercy, to teach us to think and to speak, even of God's grace and goodness, with great seriousness, and a holy awe, and to encourage us to depend upon these mercies; they are not the mercies of a man, that is frail and feeble, false and fickle, but the mercies of the Lord, the Lord God; therefore sure mercies, and sovereign mercies, mercies that may be trusted, but not tempted.

2. That he is a good God. His greatness and goodness illustrate and set off each other. That the terror of his greatness may not make us afraid, we are told how good he is; and that we may not presume upon his goodness, we are told how great he is. Many words are here heaped up to acquaint us with, and convince us of, God's goodness, and to shew how much his goodness is both his glory and his delight, yet without any tautology. 1. He is merciful. This speaks his pity, and tender compassion, like that of a father to his children. This is put first, because it is the first wheel in all the instances of God's good-will to fallen man, whose misery makes him an object of pity, *Jud. x. 16. Isa. lxiii. 1.* Let us not then have either hard thoughts of God, or hard hearts towards our brethren. 2. He is gracious. This speaks both freeness and kindness; it speaks him not only to have a compassion to his creatures, but a complacency in them, and in doing good to them, and this of his own good-will, and not for the sake of any thing in them. His mercy is grace, free grace; this teacheth us to be not only pitiful, but courteous, *1 Pet. iii. 8.* 3. He is long-suffering. This is a branch of God's goodness which sinners badness gives occasion for; Israel's had done so; they had tried his patience, and experienced it. He is long-suffering, that is, he is slow to anger, and delays the executions of his justice; he waits to be gracious, and lengthens out the offers of his mercy. 4. He is abundant in goodness and truth. This speaks plentiful goodness; it abounds above our deserts, above our conception, and expression. The springs of mercy are always full, the streams of mercy always flowing; there is mercy enough in God, enough for all, enough for each, enough for ever. It speaks promised goodness, goodness and truth put together, goodness engaged by promise, and his faithfulness pawned, for the security of it. He not only doth good, but by his promise he raiseth our expectation of it, and even obligeth himself to shew mercy. 5. He keepeth mercy for thousands. This speaks, (1.) Mercy extended to thousands of persons; when he gives to some, still he keeps for others, and is never exhausted; he has mercy enough for all the thousands of Israel, when they shall multiply as the sand. (2.) Mercy entailed upon thousands of generations, even to those upon whom the ends of the world are come; nay, the line of it is drawn parallel with that of eternity itself. 6. He forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin. Pardoning mercy is instanced in, because in that divine grace is most magnified; and because that is it that opens the door to all other gifts of the divine grace; and because of this he had lately given a very pregnant proof. He forgives offences of all sorts, *iniquity, transgression, and sin*, multiplies his pardons, and with him is plentiful redemption.

3. That he is a just and holy God. For, 1. He will by no means clear the guilty. Some read it so as to express a mitigation of wrath, even when he doth punish; *When he empties he will not make quite desolate*, *i. e.* he doth not proceed to the greatest extremity till there be no remedy. As we read it, we must expound it, that he will by no means connive at the guilty, as if he took no notice of their sin. Or, he will not clear the impenitently guilty, that go on still in their trespasses: he will not clear the guilty without some satisfaction to his justice, and necessary vindications of the honour of his government. 2. He visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. He may justly do it, for all souls are his, and there is a malignity in sin that taints the blood. He sometimes will do it, especially for the punishment of idolaters: Thus he shews his hatred of sin, and displeasure against it; yet he keepeth not his anger for ever, but visits to the third and fourth generation only, while he keeps mercy for thousands. Well, this is God's name for ever, and this is his memorial unto all generations.

(2.) How Moses received this declaration which God made of himself, and of his grace and mercy. It should seem as if Moses accepted this as a sufficient answer to his request, that God would shew him his glory; for we read not that he went into the cleft of the rock, from whence to gain a sight of God's back-parts; perhaps this satisfied him, and he desired no more; as we read not that Thomas did thrust his hand into Christ's side, though Christ invited him to do it. God having thus proclaimed his name, Moses saith, It is enough, I expect no more till I come to heaven; at least he did not think fit to relate what he saw. Now we are here told,

1. What impression it made upon him, *ver. 8. Moses made haste and bowed his head.* Thus he expressed, 1. His humble reverence and adoration of God's glory, giving him the honour due to that name he had thus proclaimed. Even the goodness of God must be



be looked upon by us with a profound veneration, and holy awe. 2. His joy in this discovery God had made of himself, and his thankfulness for it. We have reason gratefully to acknowledge God's goodness to us, not only in the real instances of it, but in the declarations he hath made of it by his word; not only that he is and will be gracious to us, but that he is pleased to let us know it. 3. His holy submission to the will of God made known in this declaration, subscribing to his justice as well as mercy, and putting himself and his people Israel under the government and conduct of such a God as Jehovah had now proclaimed himself to be. Let this God be our God for ever and ever.

2. What improvement he made of it. He immediately grounded a prayer upon it, *ver.* 9. and a most earnest affectionate prayer it is, 1. For the presence of God with his people Israel in the wilderness, *I pray thee go among us*, for thy presence is all in all to our safety and success. 2. For pardon of sin; *O pardon our iniquity and our sin*, else we cannot expect thee to go among us. And, 3. For the privileges of a peculiar people; and take us for *thine inheritance*, which thou wilt have a particular eye to, and concern for, and delight in. These things God had already promised, and given Moses assurances of, and yet he prays for them, not as doubting the sincerity of God's grants, but as one solicitous for the ratification of them. God's promises are intended not to supercede, but to direct and encourage prayer. Those who have some good hopes through grace that their sins are pardoned, yet must continue to pray for pardon, for the renewing of their pardon, and the clearing of it more and more to their souls. The more we see of God's goodness, the more ashamed we should be of our own sins, and the more earnest for an interest in it. God had said in the close of the proclamation, he would *visit the iniquity upon the children*; and Moses here deprecates that; Lord, do not only pardon it to them, but to their children, and let our covenant relation to thee be entailed upon our posterity, as an inheritance. Thus Moses, like a man of a truly publick spirit, intercedes even for the children that should be born. But it is a strange plea he urges, *for it is a stiff-necked people*. God had given this as a reason why he would not go along with them, *chap.* xxxiii. 3. Yea, saith Moses, the rather go along with us; for the worse they are, the more need they have of thy presence and grace to make them better. Moses sees them so stiff-necked, that for his part he has neither patience nor power enough to deal with them, therefore, Lord, do thou go among us, else they will never be kept in awe. Thou wilt spare, and bear with them, for thou art God, and not man, *Hof.* xi. 9.

10. And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people amongst which thou art, shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

11. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 12. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee. 13. But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. 14. For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: 15. Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice, 16. And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods. 17. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Reconciliation being made, a covenant of friendship is here settled between God and Israel. The traitors are not only pardoned, but preferred and made favourites again. Well may the assurances of this be ushered in with a Behold, a note commanding attention, and admiration. *Behold, I make a covenant*. When the covenant was broke, it was Israel that broke it; now it comes to be renewed, it is God that makes it. If there be quarrels, we must bear all the blame; if there be peace, God must have all the glory.

Here is, 1. God's part of this covenant, what he would do for them, *ver.* 10, 11. (1.) In general, *Before all thy people I will do miracles*. Note, Covenant blessings are marvellous things, *Psal.* xcvi. 1. marvels in the kingdom of grace; those here were marvels in the kingdom of nature, the drying up of Jordan, the standing still of the sun, &c. Marvels indeed, for they were without precedent, such as have not been done in all the earth; they were the joy of Israel, and the confirmation of their faith; *thy people shall see*, and own *the work of the Lord*; and they were the terror of their enemies, it is *a terrible thing that I will do*.

Nay, even God's own people should see them with astonishment. (2.) In particular, *I drive out before thee the Amorite*. God, as king of nations, plucks up some to plant others, as pleaseth him; as king of saints, he made room for the vine he brought out of Egypt, *Psal.* lxxx. 8, 9. Kingdoms are sacrificed to Israel's interests, *Isa.* xliii. 4.

2. Their part of the covenant; *observe that which I command thee*; we cannot expect the benefit of the promises unless we make conscience of the precepts. The two great precepts are, 1. *Thou shalt worship no other gods*, *ver.* 14. not give divine honour to any creature, or any name whatsoever, the creature of fancy. A good reason is annexed; it is at thy peril if thou do; *for the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*, as tender in the matters of his worship, as the husband is of the honour of the marriage-bed. *Jealousy is called the rage of a man*, *Prov.* vi. 34. but it is God's holy and just displeasure. Those cannot worship God aright, that do not worship him alone. 2. *Thou shalt make thee no molten gods*, *ver.* 17. thou shalt not worship the true God by images. This was the sin they had lately fallen into, which therefore they are particularly cautioned against.

Fences are here erected about these two precepts by two others, 1. That they might not be tempted to worship other gods, they must not join in affinity or friendship with those that did, *ver.* 12. *Take heed to thyself*, for thou art upon thy good behaviour; it is a sin thou art prone to, and that will easily beset thee, and therefore be very cautious, and carefully abstain from all appearances of it, and advances towards it, *make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land*. If God in kindness to them drove out the Canaanites, they ought in duty to God not to harbour them: What could be insisted on more reasonable than this? If God make war with the Canaanites, let not them make peace with them: If God take care that the Canaanites be not their lords, let them take care that they be not their snares. It was for their civil interest to compleat the conquest of the land; so much doth God consult our benefit in the laws he gives us. They must particularly take heed of intermarrying with them, *ver.* 15, 16. If they espoused their children, they would be in danger of espousing their gods; such is the corruption of nature, that the bad is much more likely to debauch the good, than the good to reform the bad. The way of sin is down hill: those that are in league with idolaters, will come by degrees to be in love with idolatry; and those that are prevailed with to eat of the idolatrous sacrifice, will come at length to offer it: *Obsta principiis*.

2. That they might not be tempted to *make molten gods*, they must utterly destroy those they found, and all that belonged to them, the *altars and groves*, *ver.* 13. lest if they were left standing, they should be brought in process of time, either to use them, or to take pattern by them, or to abate in their detestation and dread of idolatry. The relicks of idolatry ought to be abolished as affronts to the holy God, and a great reproach to the human nature. Let it never be said that men that pretended to reason were ever guilty of such absurdities, as to make gods of their own, and worship them.

18. The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep: Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt. 19. All that openeth the matrix is mine: and every firstling among thy cattel, whether ox or sheep, that is male. 20. But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem him not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem: and none shall appear before me empty. 21. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest. 22. And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest, and the feast of in-gathering at the years end. 23. Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. 24. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God, thrice in the year. 25. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of passover be left unto the morning. 26. The first of the first-fruits of thy land, thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mothers milk. 27. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenour of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Here is a repetition of several appointments made before, especially relating to their solemn feasts; when they had made the calf, they proclaimed a feast in honour of it; now that they might never



ver do so again, they are here charged with the observance of the feasts which God had instituted. Note, Men need not be drawn from their religion by the temptation of mirth, for we serve a master that hath abundantly provided for the joy of his servants: serious godliness is a continual feast, and joy in God always.

1. Once a week they must rest, *ver. 21. even in earing time and in harvest*, the most busy times of the year. All worldly business must give way to that holy rest; harvest work will prosper the better for the religious observation of the sabbath day in harvest time. Hereby we must shew that we prefer our communion with God, and our duty to him, before either the business or the joy of harvest.

2. Thrice a year they must feast, *ver. 23. they must then appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel*. In all our religious approaches to God we must eye him, (1.) As the Lord God, infinitely blessed, great and glorious, that we may worship him with reverence and godly fear. (2.) As the God of Israel, a God in covenant with us, that we may be encouraged to trust in him, and to serve him cheerfully. We always are before God, but in holy duties we present our selves before him, as servants to receive commands, as petitioners to sue for favours, and we have reason to do both with joy.

But it might be suggested, that when all the males from every part of the country were gone up to worship in the place that God should choose, the country would be left exposed to the insults of their neighbours, and what would become of the poor women and children, the sick and aged that were left at home? Trust God with them, *ver. 24. neither shall any man desire thy land*, not only they shall not invade it, but they shall not so much as think of invading it. Note, 1. All hearts are in God's hands, and under his check; he can not only lay a restraint upon mens actions, but upon their desires. Canaan was a desirable land, and the neighbour nations were greedy enough, and yet God saith, they shall not desire it. Let us check all sinful desires in our own hearts against God and his glory, and then trust him to check all sinful desires in the hearts of others against us and our interest. 2. The way of duty is the way of safety. If we serve God, he will preserve us, and those that venture for him shall never lose by him: While we are employed in God's work, and are attending upon him, we are taken under special protection; as noblemen and members of parliament are privileged from arrests.

The three feasts are here mentioned, with their appendages. 1. The passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt; and to this is annexed the law of the redemption of the first-born, *ver. 18, 19, 20*. This feast was instituted *chap. xii. and xiii.* and urged again, *chap. xxiii. 15*. 2. The feast of weeks, *i. e.* that of pentecost, seven weeks after the passover; and to this is annexed the law of the first-fruits. 3. The feast of in-gathering at the year's end, which was the feast of tabernacles, *ver. 22.* of these also he had spoken before, *chap. xxiii. 16*. As to those laws repeated here, *ver. 25, 26.* that against leaven relates to the passover, that of the first-fruits to the feast of pentecost, and therefore that against seething the kid in his mother's milk, in all probability, relates to the feast of in-gathering, at which God would not have them use that superstitious ceremony, which probably they had seen the Egyptians, or some other of the neighbour nations, bless their harvests with.

With these laws here repeated, it is probable, all that was said to him when he was before upon the mount was repeated likewise, and the model of the tabernacle shewed him again, lest the ruffle and discomposure which the golden calf had put him into, should have lost him the ideas he had in his mind of what he had seen and heard; also in token of a compleat reconciliation, and to shew that *not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away*, but all should be carefully preserved by the great mediator, who came not to destroy, but to fulfil, *Matt. v. 17, 18*. And in the close, (1.) Moses is ordered to write these words, *ver. 27.* that the people might be the better acquainted with them by a frequent perusal, and that they might be transmitted to the generations to come; we can never be enough thankful to God for the written word. (2.) He is told that according to the tenor of these words God would make a covenant with Moses and Israel, not with Israel immediately, but with them in Moses as mediator; thus the covenant of grace is made with believers, through Christ, who is *given for a covenant to the people*, *Isa. xlix. 8*. And as here the covenant was made according to the tenor of the commands, so it is still; for we are by baptism brought into covenant, that we may be *taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us*, *Matt. xxviii. 19, 20*.

28. And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights: he did neither eat bread, nor drink water: and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. 29. And it came to pass when Moses came down from mount Sinai (with the two tables of testimony in Moses hand, when he came down from the mount) that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. 30. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold,

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the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him. 31. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. 32. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. 33. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face. 34. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out and spake unto the children of Israel, that which he was commanded. 35. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again until he went in to speak with him.

Here is, 1. The continuance of Moses in the mount, where he was miraculously sustained, *ver. 28*. He was there in very intimate communion with God, without interruption, forty days and forty nights, and did not think it long; when we are weary of an hour or two spent in attendance upon God, and adoration of him, we should think how many days and nights Moses spent with him, and of the eternal day we hope to spend in praising him. During all this time Moses did neither eat nor drink. Though he had before been kept so long fasting, yet he did not this second time take up so many days provision along with him, but believed that *man lives not by bread alone*, and encouraged himself with the experience he had had of the truth of it: So long he continued without meat and drink, (and probably without sleep too) for, 1. The power of God supported him, that he did not need it: he that made the body can nourish it without ordinary means, which he useth, but is not tied to: *The life is more than meat*. 2. His communion with God entertained him so that he did not desire it. He had meat to eat which the world knew not of, for it was his meat and drink to hear the word of God and pray. The abundant satisfaction his soul had in the word of God, and the visions of the almighty, made him forget the body, and the pleasures of that: When God would treat his favourite Moses, it was not with meat and drink, but with his light, law and love; with the knowledge of himself and his will; then *man did indeed eat angel's food*: See what we should value as the truest pleasure; *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, and either the plenty or delicacy of that, but *righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*. As Moses, so Elijah and Christ fasted forty days and forty nights: the more dead we are to the delights of sense, the better prepared we are for the pleasures of heaven.

2. The coming down of Moses from the mount, greatly enriched, and miraculously adorned.

1. He came down enriched with the best treasure, for he brought in his hands the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, *ver. 28, 29*. It is a great favour to have the law given us; this favour was shewed to Israel, *Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20*. It is a great honour to be employed in delivering God's law to others; this honour was done to Moses.

2. He came down adorned with the best beauty; for the *skin of his face shone*, *ver. 29*. This time of his being in the mount he heard only the same he had heard before, but he saw more of the glory of God, which having with open face beheld, he was in some measure *changed into the same image from glory to glory*, *2 Cor. iii. 18*. The last time he came down from the mount with the glory of a magistrate, to frown upon and chastise Israel's idolatry; now with the glory of an angel, with tidings of peace and reconciliation. Then he came with a rod, now with the spirit of meekness. Now this may be looked upon, (1.) As a great honour done to Moses, that the people might never again question his mission, or think or speak slightly of him. He carried his credentials in his very countenance, which some think as long as he lived retained some remainders of this glory, which perhaps contributed to the vigour of his old age; that eye could not wax dim which had seen God, nor that face wrinkle which had shone with his glory; the Israelites could not look him in the face, but they must there read his commission; *Thus it was done to the man whom the king of kings did delight to honour*; yet after this they murmured against him, for the most sensible proofs will not of themselves conquer an obstinate infidelity. The shining of Moses's face was a great honour to him, yet that was no glory in comparison with the glory which excelled; we read of our Lord Jesus, not only that *his face shone as the sun*, but his whole body also, for his *raiment was white and glistering*, *Matt. xvii. 2*. But when he came down from the mount, he quite laid aside that glory, it being his will that we should walk *by faith, not by sight*. (2.) It was also a great favour to the people, and an encouragement to them, that God put this glory upon him who was their intercessor, thereby giving them assurance that he was accepted, and they through him. Thus the advancement of Christ our advocate with the Father, is the great support of our faith. (3.) It was the effect of his sight of God. Communion with God, (1.) doth make the face to shine in true honour. Serious godliness puts a lustre upon a man's countenance,



tenance, such as commands esteem and affection. (2.) It should make the face to shine in universal holiness; when we have been in the mount with God, we should let our *light shine before men*, in humility, meekness, and all the instances of a heavenly conversation; thus must the *beauty of the Lord our God be upon us*, even the *beauty of holiness*, that all we converse with may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus, Acts iv. 13.

Now concerning the shining of Moses's face, observe here,

1. That Moses was not aware of it himself, ver. 29. *He wist not that the skin of his face shone*: Thus, (1.) It is the infelicity of some that their faces shine in true grace, and yet they do not know it to take the comfort of it. Others see much of God in them, but they themselves are ready to think they have no grace. (2.) It is the humility of others, that their faces shine in eminent gifts and usefulness, and yet they do not know it to be puffed up with it; whatever beauty God puts upon us, we should still be filled with such an humble sense of our own unworthiness, and manifold infirmities, as will make us even overlook and forget that which makes our faces shine.

2. That Aaron and the children of Israel saw it and were *afraid*, ver. 30. The truth of it was attested by a multitude of witnesses, who were also conscious of the terror of it. It not only dazzled their eyes, but struck such an awe upon them, as obliged them to retire: probably they doubted whether it were a token of God's favour, or of his displeasure; and though it seemed most likely to be a good omen, yet being conscious of guilt they feared the worst, especially remembering the posture Moses found them in when he came last down from the mount. Holiness will command reverence: but the sense of sin makes men afraid of their friends, and even of that which really is a favour to them.

3. That Moses put a *vail upon his face*, when he perceived that it shone, ver. 33, 35. 1. This teacheth us all a lesson of modesty and humility: We must be content to have our excellencies obscured, and a vail drawn over them, not coveting to make a fair shew in the flesh. They that are truly desirous to be owned and accepted of God, will likewise desire not to be taken notice of, or applauded by men, *qui bene latuit bene vixit*.

2. It teacheth ministers to accommodate themselves to the capacities of people, and to preach to them as they are able to bear it. Let all that art and learning be veiled, which tends to amusement rather than edification, and let the strong condescend to the infirmities of the weak. 3. This vail signified the darkness of that dispensation; the ceremonial institution had in them much of Christ and the grace of the gospel, but a vail was drawn over it, so that the children of Israel could not distinctly and *steadfastly see those good things to come which the law had the shadow of*. It was beauty veiled; gold in the mine; a pearl in the shell: but thanks be to God, by the gospel life and immortality are brought to light, the vail is taken away from off the Old Testament; yet still it remains upon the hearts of those who shut their eyes against the light. Thus the apostle expounds this passage, 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15.

4. That when he *went in before the Lord*, to speak with him in the tabernacle of meeting, he *put off the vail*, ver. 34. Then there was no occasion for it, and before God every man doth and must appear unveiled; for all things are *naked and open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, and it is folly for us to think of concealing or disguising any thing. Every vail must be thrown aside when we come to present our selves unto the Lord. This signified also, as it is explained 2 Cor. iii. 16. that when a *soul turns to the Lord*, the *vail shall be taken away*, that with open face it may behold his glory. And when we shall come before the Lord in heaven, to be there for ever speaking with him, the vail shall not only be taken off from the divine glory, but from our hearts and eyes, that we may see as we are seen, and know as we are known.

### C H A P. XXXV.

*What should have been said and done upon Moses's coming down the first time from the mount, if the golden calf had not broke the measures, and put all into disorder, now at last when with great difficulty reconciliation was made, begins to be said, and done, and that great affair of the setting up of God's worship is put into its former channel again, and goes on now without interruption.* 1. *Moses gives Israel those instructions he had received, which required a present observance*, (1.) Concerning the sabbath, ver. 1, 2, 3. (2.) Concerning the contribution that was to be made for the erecting of the tabernacle, ver. 4—9. (3.) Concerning the framing of the tabernacle, and the utensils of it, ver. 10—19. 2. *The people bring in their contributions*, ver. 20—29. 3. *The head-workmen are nominated*, ver. 30—35.

1. **A**ND Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said unto them, These are the words which the LORD hath command-

ed, that ye should do them. 2. Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doth work therein, shall be put to death. 3. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day. 4. And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying, 5. Take ye from amongst you an offering unto the LORD: Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass, 6. And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats hair, 7. And ram skins dyed red, and badgers skins, and shittim-wood, 8. And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, 9. And onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breast-plate. 10. And every wise-hearted among you, shall come and make all that the LORD hath commanded; 11. The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his sockets, 12. The ark and the staves thereof, with the mercy-seat, and the vail of the covering, 13. The table and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shew-bread, 14. The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, 15. And the incense-altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle, 16. The altar of burnt-offering with his brazen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 17. The hangings of the court, his pillars and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, 18. The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords, 19. The clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons to minister in the priests office.

It was said in general, chap. xxxiv. 32. *Moses gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him*: But the erecting and furnishing of the tabernacle being the work to which they were now immediately to apply themselves, here is particular mention of the orders given concerning that. 1. All the congregation is summoned to attend, ver. 1. viz. The heads and rulers of the congregation, the representatives of the several tribes, who must receive instructions from Moses as he had received them from the Lord, and must communicate them to the people. Thus St. John being commanded to write what had been revealed to him to the seven churches, writes it to the angels, or ministers of the churches. 2. Moses gave them in charge all that, and that only which God had commanded him; thus he approved himself faithful both to God and Israel, between whom he was a messenger or mediator. If he had added, altered, or diminished, he had been false to both: But both sides having reposed a trust in him, he was true to the trust; yet he was faithful as a servant only, but *Christ as a son*, Heb. iii. 5, 6. 3. He begins with the law of the sabbath, because that was much insisted on in the instructions he had received, ver. 2, 3. *Six days shall work be done*; work for the tabernacle, the work of the day that was now to be done in its day, and they had little else to do here in the wilderness, where they had neither husbandry nor merchandise, neither food to get, nor clothes to make; but *on the seventh day you must not strike a stroke, no not at the tabernacle work*; the honour of the sabbath was above that of the sanctuary, more ancient, and more lasting; that must be to you a holy day, devoted to God, and not to be spent in common business, it is a sabbath of rest: It is a *sabbath of sabbaths*, so some read it; more honourable and excellent than any of the other feasts, and should survive them all. A sabbath of sabbatism, so others read it, being typical of that sabbatism or rest, both spiritual and eternal, which remains for the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. It is a sabbath of rest, i. e. in which a rest from all worldly labour must be very carefully and strictly observed. It is a sabbath, and a little sabbath, so some of the Jews would have it read; not only observing the whole day, as a sabbath, but an hour before the beginning of it, and an hour after the ending of it, which they throw in over and above out of their own time, and call a little sabbath, to shew how glad they are of the approach of the sabbath, and how loth to part with it. It is a sabbath of rest, but it is rest to the Lord, to whose honour it must be devoted. A penalty is here annexed to the breach of it, *Whosoever doth work therein shall be put to death*; and a particular prohibition of kindling fires on the sabbath day for any servile work, as smith's work, or plumber's, &c. 4. He orders



orders preparations to be made for the setting up of the tabernacle. Two things were to be done :

1. All that were able must contribute ; *Take ye from among you an offering*, ver. 5. The tabernacle was to be dedicated to the honour of God, and used in his service, and therefore what was brought for the setting up and furnishing of that, was *an offering to the Lord*. Our goodness extendeth not to God, but what is laid out for the support of his kingdom and interest among men he is pleased to accept as an offering to himself, and he requires such acknowledgments of our receiving our all from him ; and such instances of our dedicating our all to him. The rule is, *Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring*. It was not to be a tax imposed upon them, but a benevolence or voluntary contribution ; to intimate to us, 1. That God has not made our yoke heavy. He is a prince that doth not burthen his subjects with taxes, nor *make them to serve with an offering*, but *draws with the cords of a man*, and leaves it to our selves to judge what is right ; his is a government that there is no cause to complain of, for he doth not rule with rigour. 2. That God loves a chearful giver, and is best pleased with the *free-will offerings*. Those services are acceptable to him that come from the *willing heart of a willing people*, Psal. cx. 3.

2. All that were skilful must work, ver. 10. *Every wise hearted among you shall come and make* : See how God dispenseth his gifts variously, and *as every man hath received the gift, so he must minister*, 1 Pet. iv. 10. Those that were rich must bring in materials to work on ; those that were ingenious must serve the tabernacle with their ingenuity ; as they needed one another, so the tabernacle needed them both, 1 Cor. xii. 7, 21. The work was likely to go on, when some helped with their purses, others with their hands, and both with a willing heart. Moses, as he had told them what must be given, ver. 5—9. so he gives them the general heads of what must be made, ver. 11—19. that seeing how much work was before them, they might apply themselves to it the more vigorously, and every hand might be busy ; and it gave them such an idea of the fabrick designed, that they could not but long to see it finished.

20. And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21. And they came every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. 22. And they came both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tables, all jewels of gold : and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the LORD. 23. And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats hair, and red skins of rams, and badgers skins, brought them. 24. Every one that did offer an offering of silver or brass, brought the LORD's offering : and every man with whom was found shittim-wood for any work of the service, brought it. 25. And all the women that were wise hearted, did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. 26. And all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom, spun goats hair. 27. And the rulers brought onyx-stones, and stones to be set, for the ephod, and for the breast-plate : 28. And spice and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 29. The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD ; every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made, by the hand of Moses.

Moses having made known to them the will of God, they went home, and immediately put in practise what they had heard, ver. 20. O that every congregation would thus depart from the hearing of the word of God, with a full resolution to be *doers of the same* ! Observe here,

1. The offerings that were brought for the service of the tabernacle, ver. 21, &c. Concerning which many things may be noted. 1. It is intimated, that they brought their offerings presently ; they departed to their tents immediately to fetch their offering, and did not desire time to consider of it, lest their zeal should be cooled by delays. What duty God convinceth us of, and calls us to, we should set about it speedily. No season will be more convenient than the present season. 2. It is said that *their spirits made them willing*, ver. 21. and *their hearts*, ver. 29. What they did they did chearfully, and from a good principle. They were willing, and it was not any external inducement that made them so,

but their spirits. It was from a principle of love to God, and his service ; a desire of his presence with them, by his ordinances ; gratitude for the great things he had done for them ; faith in his promise of what he would further do, or at least from the present consideration of these things, that they were willing to offer. What we give and do for God is then acceptable, when it comes from a good principle in the heart and spirit. 3. When it is said that as many as were willing-hearted brought their offerings, ver. 22. it should seem as if there were some that were not, who loved their gold better than their God, and would not part with it, no not for the service of the tabernacle ; such there are who will be called Israelites, and yet will not be moved by the equity of the thing, God's expectations from them, and the good examples of those about them, to part with any thing for the interests of God's kingdom : they are for the true religion, provided it be cheap, and will cost them nothing. 4. The offerings were of divers kinds, according as they had ; those that had gold and precious stones brought them, not thinking any thing too good and too rich to part with for the honour of God. Those that had not precious stones to bring, brought goats hair, and rams skins : if we cannot do as much as others for God, we must not therefore sit still and do nothing : if the meaner offerings which are according to our ability gain us not such a reputation among men, yet they shall not fail of acceptance with God, who requires *according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. Two mites from a pauper were more pleasing than so many talents from a Dives, 2 Kings v. 23. God hath an eye to the heart of the giver, more than to the value of the gift. 5. Many of the things they offered were their ornaments, bracelets and rings, and tablets or locketts, ver. 22. and even the women parted with these. *Can a maid forget her ornaments* ? Thus far they forgot them, that they preferred the beautifying of the sanctuary before their own adorning. Let this teach us in general to part with that for God when he calls for it, which is very dear to us, which we value, and value our selves by ; and particularly to lay aside our ornaments, and deny our selves in them, when either they occasion offence to others, or feed our own pride. If we think those gospel rules concerning our clothing too strict, 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. I fear we would scarce have done as these Israelites here did. If they thought their ornaments well bestowed upon the tabernacle, shall not we think the want of ornaments well made up by the graces of the Spirit ? Prov. i. 9. 6. These rich things that they offered, we may suppose were mostly the spoils of the Egyptians ; for the Israelites in Egypt were kept poor, till they borrowed at parting. And we may suppose the rulers had better things, ver. 27. only because they had a better interest when they borrowed. Who would have thought that ever the wealth of Egypt should have been so well employed ; but thus God hath often made *the earth to help the woman*, Rev. xii. 16. It was by a special providence and promise of God, that the Israelites got all that spoil, and therefore it was highly fit they should devote a part of it to the service of that God, to whom they owed it all. Let every man give *according as God hath prospered him*, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Extraordinary successes should be acknowledged by extraordinary offerings. Apply it to human learning, arts and sciences, which are borrowed as it were from the Egyptians ; those that are enriched with these, must devote them to the service of God and his tabernacle : they may be used as helps to understand the scriptures, as ornaments or handmaids to divinity. But then great care must be taken that Egypt's gods mingle not with Egypt's gold ; Moses, though learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, did not therefore pretend in the least instance to correct the pattern shewed him in the mount. The furnishing of the tabernacle with the riches of Egypt was perhaps a good omen to the Gentiles, who in the fulness of time should be brought into the gospel tabernacle, and their silver and their gold with them, Isa. lx. 9. and it should be said, *Blessed be Egypt my people*, Isa. xix. 25. 7. We may suppose that the remembrance of the offerings to the making of the golden calf, made them the more forward in these offerings. Those that had then parted with their ear-rings, would now testify their repentance by giving the rest of their Jewels to the service of God : godly sorrow worketh such a revenge, 2 Cor. vii. 11. And those that had kept themselves pure from that idolatry, yet argued with themselves, were they so forward in contributing to an idol, and shall we be backward or sneaking in our offerings to the Lord ? Thus some good was brought even out of that evil.

2. The work that was done for the service of the tabernacle, ver. 25. *The women did spin with their hands* ; some spun fine work, of blue and purple, others coarse work, of goats hair, and yet theirs also is said to be done in wisdom, ver. 26. As it is not only rich gifts, so it is not only fine work that God accepts. Notice is here taken of the good womens work for God, as well as of Bezaleel's and Aholiab's : The meanest hand employed, the meanest service performed for the honour of God, shall have an honourable recompense ; Mary's anointing Christ's head shall be told for a memorial, Matt. xxvi. 13. and a record kept of the women that laboured in the gospel tabernacle, Phil. iv. 3. and were helpers to Paul in Christ Jesus, Rom. xvi. 3. It is part of the



the character of the virtuous woman, that she layeth *her hand to the spindle*, Prov. xxxi. 19. This employment was here turned to a pious use, as it may be still, though we have no hangings to make for the tabernacle, by the imitation of the charity of Dorcas, who made coats and garments for poor widows, *Acts ix. 39.* Even those that are not in a capacity to give in charity, may yet work in charity, and thus the poor may relieve the poor, and those that have nothing but their limbs and senses may be very charitable in the labour of love.

30. And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 31. And he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; 32. And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 33. And in the cutting of stones to set them, and in carving of wood to make any manner of cunning work. 34. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them, that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Here is the divine appointment of the master-workmen, that there might be no strife for the office, and that all that were employed in the work, might take direction from, and give account to these general inspectors; for God is the God of order, and not of confusion.

Observe, 1. Those whom God called by name to this service, he filled with the Spirit of God, to qualify them for it, *ver. 30, 31.* Skill in secular employments is God's gift, and comes from above, *Jam. i. 17.* From him the faculty is, and the improvement of it: To his honour therefore all knowledge must be devoted, and we must study how to serve him with it. The work was extraordinary which Bezaleel was designed for, and therefore he was qualified in an extraordinary manner for it; thus when the apostles were appointed to be master-builders in setting up the gospel tabernacle, they were filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom and understanding.

2. They were appointed not only to devise, but to work, *ver. 32. to work all manner of work, ver. 35.* Those of eminent gifts, that are capable of directing others, must not think that that will excuse them in idleness: many are ingenious enough in cutting out work for other people, and can tell what this man and that man should do; but the burthens they bind on others, they themselves will not touch with one of their fingers. These will fall under the character of slothful servants.

3. They were not only to devise and work themselves, but they were to teach others, *ver. 34.* Not only that he may have power to command, but that he may take pains to instruct. Those that rule should teach; and those to whom God hath given knowledge, should be willing to communicate it for the benefit of others, not coveting to monopolize it.

#### C H A P. XXXVI.

In this chapter, 1. The work of the tabernacle is begun, *ver. 1—4.* 2. A stop put to the people's contributions, *ver. 5—7.* 3. A particular account is given of the making of the tabernacle it self; the fine curtains of it, *ver. 8—13.* The coarse ones, *ver. 14—19.* The boards, *ver. 20—30.* The bars, *ver. 31—34.* The partition vail, *ver. 35, 36.* and the hanging for the door, *ver. 37, 38.*

1. **T**hen wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whom the LORD put wisdom and understanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded. 2. And Moses called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wise-hearted man, in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, even every one whose heart stirred him up to come unto the work to do it. 3. And they received of Moses all the offering which the children of Israel had brought for the work of the service of the sanctuary, to make it withal. And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning. 4. And all the wise men that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made. 5. And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service

of the work which the LORD commanded to make. 6. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing. 7. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

Here is, 1. The workmen set in, without delay: Then they wrought, *ver. 1.* When God had qualified them for the work, then they applied themselves to it. Note, The talents we are intrusted with, must not be laid up, but laid out; not hid in a napkin, but traded with. What have we all our gifts for, but to do good with them? Then when Moses called them, *ver. 2.* Even those whom God has qualified for, and inclined to the service of the tabernacle, yet must wait for a regular call to it, either extraordinary, as that of preachers and apostles; or ordinary, as that of pastors and teachers. And observe who they were that Moses called; those in whose heart God had put wisdom for this purpose, beyond their natural capacity, and whose heart stirred him up to come to the work in good earnest. Note, Those are to be called to the building of the gospel tabernacle, whom God has by his grace made in some measure fit for the work, and free to it: Ability and willingness, with resolution, are the two things to be regarded in the call of ministers. Has God given them not only knowledge but wisdom? For he that would win souls must be wise: and have their hearts stirred them up to come to the work, and not to the honour only; to do it, and not to talk of it only? Let them come to it with full purpose of heart to go through with it.

The materials which the people had contributed were delivered by Moses to the workmen, *ver. 3.* They could not create a tabernacle, that is, make it, out of nothing, nor work, unless they had something to work upon; that therefore the people brought, and Moses put it into their hands. Precious souls are the materials of the gospel tabernacle, they are built up a spiritual house, *1 Pet. ii. 5.* to this end they are to offer themselves a free-will offering to the Lord, for his service, *Rom. xv. 16.* and they are then committed to the care of his ministers, as builders, to be framed and wrought upon for their edification, and increase in holiness, till they all come like the curtains of the tabernacle, in the unity of the faith to be a holy temple, *Eph. ii. 21, 22. iv. 12, 13.*

2. The contributions restrained: The people continued to bring free offerings every morning, *ver. 3.* Note, We should always make it our morning's work to bring our offering unto the Lord; even the spiritual offerings of prayer and praise, and a broken heart surrendered entirely to God: This is that which the duty of every day requires. God's compassions are new every morning, and so should our offerings be, our free offerings: God's grace to us is free, and so must our duty to him be. Probably there were some that were backward at first to bring their offering, but their neighbour's forwardness stirred them up and shamed them. The zeal of some provoked many. There are those who will be content to follow, that yet do not care for leading in a good work: It is best to be forward, but better late than never. Or, perhaps some that had offered at first, having pleasure in reflecting upon it, offered more; so far were they from grudging what they had contributed, that they doubled their contribution: Thus in charity, give a portion to seven, and also to eight; having given much, give more.

Now observe, 1. The honesty of the workmen. When they had cut out their work, and found how their stuff held out, and that the people were still forward to bring in more, they went in a body to Moses to tell him, that there needed no more contributions, *ver. 4, 5.* Had they sought their own things, they had now a fair opportunity of enriching themselves by the people's gifts, for they might have made up their work, and converted the overplus to their own use, as perquisites of their place. But they were men of integrity, that scorned to do so mean a thing, as to sponge upon the people, and enrich themselves with that which was offered to the Lord: Those are the greatest cheats that cheat the publick: If to murder many is worse than to murder one, by the same rule to defraud communities, and to rob the church or state, is a much greater crime than to pick the pocket of a single person. But these workmen here were not only ready to account for all they received, but were not willing to receive more than they had occasion for, lest they should come either into the temptation, or under the suspicion, of taking it to themselves. These were men that knew when they had enough.

2. The liberality of the people; that though they saw what a great deal was contributed, yet they continued to offer, till they were forbidden by proclamation, *ver. 6, 7.* A rare instance! most need a spur to quicken their charity, few need a bridle to check it; yet these here did. Had Moses aimed to enrich himself, he might have suffered them still to bring in their offerings; and when the work was finished, might have taken the remainder to himself: but he also preferred the publick before his own private interest, and was therein a good example to all in publick trusts. It is said, *ver. 6.* the people were restrained from bringing; they looked upon



upon it as a restraint upon them, not to be allowed to do more for the tabernacle; such was the zeal of those people, who gave to their power, yea and beyond their power, praying the collectors with much intreaty to receive the gift, 2 Cor. viii. 3, 4. These were the fruits of a first love; in these last days charity is grown too cold for us to expect such things from it.

8. And every wife-hearted man, among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle, made ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work made he them. 9. The length of one curtain was twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains were all of one size. 10. And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and the other five curtains he coupled one unto another. 11. And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain, from the selvage in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of another curtain, in the coupling of the second. 12. Fifty loops made he on one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which was in the coupling of the second: the loops held one curtain to another. 13. And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches. So it became one tabernacle.

The first work they set about, was the framing of the house; that must be done before the furniture of it was prepared. This house was not made of timber or stone, but of curtains curiously embroidered and coupled together. This served to typify the state of the church in this world, the palace of God's kingdom among men. 1. Though it be upon the earth, yet its foundation is not in the earth, as that of a house is; no, Christ's kingdom is not of this world, nor founded in it. 2. It is mean and mutable, and in a militant state; shepherds dwelt in tents, and God is the shepherd of Israel; soldiers dwelt in tents, and the Lord is a man of war, and his church marcheth through an enemy's country, and must fight its way. The kings of the earth close themselves in cedar, Jer. xxii. 15. but the ark of God was lodged in curtains only. 3. Yet there is a beauty in holiness: the curtains were embroidered, so is the church adorned with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, that raiment of needle-work, Psal. xli. 14. 4. The several societies of believers are united in one, and, as here, all become one tabernacle, for there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

14. And he made curtains of goats hair, for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them. 15. The length of one curtain was thirty cubits, and four cubits was the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains were of one size. 16. And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves. 17. And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain, which coupleth the second. 18. And he made fifty taches of brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one. 19. And he made a covering for the tent, of rams skins dyed red, and a covering of badgers skins above that. 20. And he made boards for the tabernacle, of shittim-wood, standing up. 21. The length of a board was ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half. 22. One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 23. And he made boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side, southward. 24. And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons. 25. And for the other side of the tabernacle which is toward the north corner, he made twenty boards, 26. And their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. 27. And for the sides of the tabernacle westward, he made six boards. 28. And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides. 29. And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners. 30. And there were eight boards, and their sockets were sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets. 31. And he made bars of shittim-wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle, 32. And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle

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for the sides westward. 33. And he made the middle bar to shoot through the boards from the one end to the other. 34. And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings of gold to be places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

Here, 1. The shelter and special protection that the church is under, is signified by the curtains of hair cloth which were spread over the tabernacle, and the covering of rams skins and badgers skins over them, ver. 14—19. God has provided for his people a shadow from the heat, and a covert from storm and rain, Isa. iv. 6. they are armed against all weathers; the sun and moon shall not smite them; and they are protected from the storms of divine wrath, that hail which will sweep away the refuge of lies, Isa. xxviii. 18. Those that dwell in God's house shall find, be the tempest never so violent, or the dropping never so continual, it doth not rain in. 2. The strength and stability of the church, though it be but a tabernacle, is signified by the boards and bars, with which the curtains were borne up, ver. 20—34. The boards were coupled together, and joined by the bars which shot through them; for the union of the church, and the hearty agreement of those that are its stays and supporters among themselves, contributes abundantly to its strength and establishment.

35. And he made a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: with cherubims made he it of cunning work. 36. And he made thereunto four pillars of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks were of gold, and he cast for them four sockets of silver. 37. And he made an hanging for the tabernacle door, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, of needle-work. 38. And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters, and their fillets with gold: but their five sockets were of brass.

In the building of a house there is a great deal of work about the doors and partitions; in the tabernacle they were answerable to the rest of the fabrick; that was curtains, these were vails.

1. There was a vail made for a partition between the holy place, and the most holy, ver. 35, 36. This signified the darkness and distance of that dispensation, compared with the New Testament, which shews us the glory of God more clearly, and invites us to draw near to it: and the darkness and distance of our present state, in comparison with heaven, where we shall be ever with the Lord, and see him as he is.

2. There was a vail made for the door of the tabernacle, ver. 37, 38. At this door the people assembled, though forbidden to enter; for while we are in this present state, we must get as near to God as we can.

### C H A P. XXXVII.

Bezaleel and his workmen are still busy, making, 1. The ark with the mercy-seat and the cherubims, ver. 1—9. 2. The table with its vessels, ver. 10—16. 3. The candlestick with its appurtenances, ver. 17—24. 4. The golden altar for incense, ver. 25—28. 5. The holy oil and incense, ver. 29. The particular appointment concerning each of which we had before in the 25th and 30th chapters.

1. **A**ND Bezaleel made the ark of shittim-wood: two cubits and a half was the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it. 2. And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about. 3. And he cast for it four rings of gold, to be set by the four corners of it: even two rings upon the one side of it, and two rings upon the other side of it. 4. And he made staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold. 5. And he put the staves into the rings, by the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. 6. And he made the mercy-seat of pure gold: two cubits and an half was the length thereof, and one cubit and an half the breadth thereof. 7. And he made two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-seat: 8. One cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side: out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 9. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy-seat-ward were the faces of the cherubims.

It may be thought strange, that Moses, when he had recorded so fully the instructions given him upon the mount, for the making of all these things, should here record as particularly the mak-



ing of them ; when it might have sufficed, only to have said in a few words, that each of these things was made exactly according to the directions before recited. We are sure Moses, when he wrote by divine inspiration, used no vain repetitions ; there are no idle words in scripture : Why then are so many chapters taken up with this narrative, which we are tempted to think needless and tedious ? But we must consider, 1. That Moses wrote primarily for the people of Israel, to whom it would be of great use to read and hear often of these divine and sacred treasures with which they were intrusted. These several ornaments wherewith the tabernacle was furnished, they were not admitted to see, but the priests only, and therefore it was requisite they should be thus largely described particularly to them. That which they ought to read again and again, lest they should fail of doing, that is written again and again : thus many of the same passages of the history of Christ are in the New Testament related by two or three, and some by four of the evangelists, for the same reason. The great things of God's law and gospel we need to have inculcated upon us again and again. To write the same (saith St. Paul) to me *is not grievous, but for you it is safe*, Phil. iii. 1. 2. Moses would thus shew the great care which he and his workmen took to make every thing exactly according to the pattern shewed him in the mount. Having before given us the original, he here gives us the copy, that we may compare them, and observe how exactly they agree. Thus he appeals to every reader concerning his fidelity to him that appointed him, in all his house, and in all the particulars of it, *Heb. iii. 5*. And thus he teacheth us to have respect to all God's commandments, even to every iota and tittle of them. 3. It is intimated hereby, that God takes delight in the sincere obedience of his people, and keeps an exact account of it, which shall be produced to their honour in the resurrection of the just. None can be so punctual in their duty, but God will be as punctual in his notices of it. He is *not unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love*, in every instance of it, *Heb. vi. 16*. 4. The spiritual riches and beauties of the gospel tabernacle are hereby recommended to our frequent and serious consideration. Go walk about this Sion, view it and review it : the more you contemplate the glories of the church, the more you will admire them, and be in love with them. The charter of its privileges, and the account of its constitution, will very well bear a second reading.

In these verses we have an account of the making of the ark, with its glorious and most significant appurtenances, the mercy-seat and the cherubims. Consider these three together, and they represent, the glory of a holy God, the sincerity of a holy heart, and the communion that is between them, in and by a mediator. 1. It is the glory of a holy God that he dwelleth between the cherubims, *i. e.* is continually attended and adored by the blessed angels, whose swiftness was signified by the wings of the cherubim, and their unanimity and joint concurrence in their services, was signified by their faces being one towards another. 2. It is the character of an upright heart, that, like the ark of the testimony, it hath the law of God hid, and kept in it. 3. By Jesus Christ, the great propitiation, there is reconciliation made, and a communion settled between us and God : he interposeth between us and God's displeasure ; and not only so, but through him we become entitled to God's favour. If he write his law in our heart, he will be to us a God, and we shall be to him a people ; from the mercy-seat he will teach us, there he will accept us, and shew himself merciful to our unrighteousnesses ; and under the shadow of his wings we shall be safe and easy.

10. And he made the table of shittim-wood : two cubits was the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 11. And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made thereunto a crown of gold round about. 12. Also he made thereunto a border of an hand breadth, round about : and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about. 13. And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners that were in the four feet thereof. 14. Over against the border were the rings, the places for the staves, to bear the table. 15. And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold to bear the table. 16. And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold. 17. And he made the candlestick of pure gold : of beaten work made he the candlestick, his shaft and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers were of the same. 18. And six branches going out of the sides thereof : three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof. 19. Three bowls made after the fashion of almonds, in one branch, a knop and a flower ; and three bowls made like almonds, in another branch, a knop and a flower : so throughout the six branches, going out of the

candlestick. 20. And in the candlestick were four bowls made like almonds, his knops and his flowers. 21. And a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches going out of it. 22. Their knops and their branches were of the same : all of it was one beaten work of pure gold. 23. And he made his seven lamps, and his snuffers, and his snuff-dishes, of pure gold. 24. Of a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the vessels thereof.

Here is, 1. The making of the tables on which the shew-bread was to be continually placed : God is a good householder, that always keeps a plentiful table. Is the world his tabernacle ? His providence in it spreads a table for all the creatures ; he *provideth food for all flesh*. Is the church his tabernacle ? His grace in it spreads a table for all believers, furnished with the bread of life. But observe how much the dispensation of the gospel exceeds that of the law. Though here was a table furnished, it was only with shew-bread, bread to be looked upon, not to be fed upon, while it was on this table, and afterwards only by the priests ; but to the table Christ has spread in the new covenant, all good christians are invited guests ; and to them it is said, *Eat, O friends, come eat of my bread* ; what the law gave but a sight of at a distance, the gospel gives the enjoyment of, and a hearty welcome to.

2. The making of the candlestick ; which was not of wood overlaid with gold, but all beaten work of pure gold only, *ver. 17, 22*. This signified that light of divine revelation with which God's church upon earth (which is his tabernacle among men) hath always been enlightened, being always supplied with fresh oil from Christ the good olive, *Zech. iv. 2, 3*. God's manifestations of himself in this world are but candle-light, compared with the daylight of the future state. The bible is a golden candlestick, it is of pure gold, *Psal. xix. 10*. from it light is diffused to every part of God's tabernacle, that by it his spiritual priests may see to minister unto the Lord, and to do the service of his sanctuary. This candlestick has not only its bowls for necessary use, but its knops and flowers for ornament ; many things which God saw fit to beautify his word with, which we can no more give a reason for, than for these knops and flowers, and yet must be sure they were added for good purpose. Let us bless God for this candlestick, have an eye to it continually, and dread the removal of it out of its place.

25. And he made the incense-altar of shittim-wood : the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit (it was four-square) and two cubits was the height of it ; the horns thereof were of the same. 26. And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it : also he made unto it a crown of gold round about. 27. And he made two rings of gold for it, under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two sides thereof, to be places for the staves to bear it withal. 28. And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold. 29. And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the apothecary.

Here is, 1. The making of the golden altar, on which incense was to be burnt daily ; which signified both the prayers of saints, and the intercession of Christ, to which is owing the acceptableness and success of those prayers. The rings and staves, and all the appurtenances of this altar were overlaid with gold, as all the vessels of the table and candlestick were of gold, for these were used in the holy place. God is the best, and we must serve him with the best we have ; but the best we can serve him with in his courts on earth, is but as brass, compared with the gold, the sinless and spotless perfection with which his saints shall serve him in his holy place above.

2. The preparing of the incense, which was to be burnt upon this altar, and with it the holy anointing oil, *ver. 29*. according to that dispensatory, *chap. xxx. 22, &c.* God taught Bezaleel this art also ; so that though he was not before acquainted with it, yet he made up these things according to the work of the apothecary, as dextrously and exactly as if he had been bred up to the trade. Where God gives wisdom and grace, it will make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work.

## C H A P. XXXVIII.

Here is an account, 1. Of the making of the brazen altar, *ver. 1—7*. and the laver, *ver. 8*. 2. The preparing of the hangings for the inclosing of the court in which the tabernacle was to stand, *ver. 9—20*. 3. A summary account of the gold, silver, and brass, that was contributed to, and used in the preparing of the tabernacle, *ver. 21—31*.



1. **A**ND he made the altar of burnt-offering of shittim-wood: five cubits was the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof, (it was four-square) and three cubits the height thereof. 2. And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it: the horns thereof were of the same, and he overlaid it with brass. 3. And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots, and the shovels, and the basins, and the flesh-hooks, and the fire-pans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass. 4. And he made for the altar a brazen grate of net-work, under the compass thereof, beneath unto the midst of it. 5. And he cast four rings for the four ends of the grate of brass, to be places for the staves. 6. And he made the staves of shittim-wood, and overlaid them with brass. 7. And he put the staves into the rings on the sides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards. 8. And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Bezaleel having finished the gold work, which though the richest, yet was ordered to lie most out of sight, in the tabernacle it self, here goes on to prepare the court, which lay open to the view of all. Two things the court was furnished with, and both made of brass.

1. An altar of burnt-offering, *ver. 1—7*. On this all their sacrifices were offered, and this was it which being sanctified it self for this purpose, by the divine appointment, sanctified the gift that was in faith offered on it. Christ was himself the altar to his own sacrifice of atonement, and so he is to all our sacrifices of acknowledgment. We must have an eye to him in offering them, as God hath in accepting them.

2. A laver, to hold water for the priests to wash in, when they went in to minister, *ver. 8*. This signified the provision that is made in the gospel of Christ for the cleansing of our souls from the moral pollution of sin by the merit and grace of Christ, that we may be fit to serve the holy God in holy duties. This is here said to be made of the looking-glasses, (or mirrors) of the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle. (1.) It should seem these women were eminent and exemplary for devotion, attending more frequently and seriously at the place of public worship than others did, and notice is here taken of it to their honour. Anna was such a one long after, who *departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day*, Luke ii. 37. It seems in every age of the church there have been some that have thus distinguished themselves by their serious zealous piety, and they have hereby dignified themselves, for devout women are really honourable women, *Acts xiii. 50*. and not the less so, for their being called by the scoffers of the latter days, filly women. Probably these women here were such as shewed their zeal upon this occasion, by assisting in the work that was now a doing, for the service of the tabernacle. They assembled by troops, so the word is; a blessed sight! to see so many, and those so zealous, and so unanimous in this good work. (2.) These women parted with their looking-glasses, which were of the finest brass, burnished for that purpose, for the use of the tabernacle. Those women that admire their own beauty, are in love with their own shadow, and make the putting on of apparel their chief adorning, by which they value and recommend themselves; could of any thing ill spare their looking-glasses, yet these women offered them to God: Either, 1. In token of their repentance for the former abuse of them, to the support of their pride and vanity; now they were convinced of their folly, and had devoted themselves to the service of God, at the door of the tabernacle, they thus threw away that which, though lawful and useful in it self, yet had been an occasion of sin to them: Thus Mary Magdalen that had been a sinner, when she became a penitent, wiped Christ's feet with her hair. Or, 2. In token of their great zeal for the work of the tabernacle; rather than the workmen should want brass, or not have of the best, they would part with their looking-glasses, though they could not well be without them. God's service and glory must always be preferred by us before any satisfactions or accommodations of our own. Let us never complain of the want of that which we may honour God by parting with. 3. These looking-glasses were used for the making of the laver. Either they were artfully joined together, or else molten down and cast anew; but it is probable the laver was so brightly burnished, that the sides of it still served for looking-glasses, that the priests when they came to wash might there see their faces, and so discover the spots, and wash them clean. Note, In the washing of repentance, there is need of the looking-glass of self-examination. The word of God is a glass, in which we may see our own faces, see *Jam. i. 23*. and with it we must compare our own hearts and lives, that finding out our blemishes, we may wash with particular sorrow, and ap-

plication of the blood of Christ to our souls. Usually the more particular we are in the confession of sin, the more comfort we have in the sense of the pardon.

9. And he made the court: on the south side, southward, the hangings of the court were of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits. 10. Their pillars were twenty, and their brazen sockets twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets were of silver. 11. And for the north side, the hangings were an hundred cubits, their pillars were twenty, and their sockets of brass twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. 12. And for the west side were hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their sockets ten: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. 13. And for the east side, eastward, fifty cubits. 14. The hangings of the one side of the gate were fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. 15. And for the other side of the court gate, on this hand and that hand, were hangings of fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their sockets three. 16. All the hangings of the court round about, were of fine twined linen. 17. And the sockets for the pillars were of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver; and the overlaying of their chapiters of silver; and all the pillars of the court were filleted with silver. 18. And the hanging for the gate of the court was needlework, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court. 19. And their pillars were four, and their sockets of brass four, their hooks of silver, and the overlaying of their chapiters, and their fillets, of silver. 20. And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, were of brass.

The walls of the court, or church-yard were like the rest, curtains or hangings, made according to the appointment, *chap. xxvii. 9, &c.* This represented the state of the Old Testament church, it was a garden enclosed: the worshippers were then confined to a little compass. But the inclosure being of curtains only, intimated that that confinement of the church to one particular Nation was not to be perpetual. The dispensation it self was a tabernacle dispensation, moveable and mutable, and in due time to be taken down, and folded up, when the place of the tent should be enlarged, and its cords lengthened, to make room for the Gentile world, as is foretold *I/a. liv. 2, 3*. The church here on earth is but the court of God's house, and happy they that tread these courts, and flourish in them, but through these courts we are passing to the holy place above; *Blessed are they that dwell in that house of God, they will be still praising him.* The inclosing of a court before the tabernacle, teacheth us a gradual approach to God. The priests that ministered must pass through the holy court, before they entered the holy house. Thus before solemn ordinances, there ought to be the separated and inclosed court of a solemn preparation, in which we must wash our hands, and so draw near with a true heart.

21. This is the sum of the tabernacle, even of the tabernacle of testimony, as it was counted, according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, son to Aaron the priest. 22. And Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses. 23. And with him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen. 24. All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the holy place, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 25. And the silver of them that were numbred of the congregation, was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary. 26. A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbred, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. 27. And of the hundred talents of silver, were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hun-



hundred talents, a talent for a socket. 28. And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five shekels, he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them. 29. And the brass of the offering was seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels. 30. And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brasen altar, and the brasen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar. 31. And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

Here we have a breviate of the account which by Moses's appointment the Levites took and kept of the gold, silver, and brass, that was brought in for the tabernacle's use, and how it was employed. Ithamar the son of Aaron was appointed to draw up this account, who was thus by lesser services trained up and fitted for greater, *ver. 21.* Bezaleel and Aholiab must bring in the account, *ver. 22, 23.* and Ithamar must audit it, and give it in to Moses. And it was thus:

1. All the gold was a free-will offering, every man brought as he could and would, and it amounted to twenty nine talents, and seven hundred and thirty shekels over, which some compute to about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds worth of gold, according to the present value of it. Of this was made all the golden furniture and vessels.

2. The silver was levied by way of tax, every man was assessed half a shekel, a kind of poll-money, this amounted in the whole to a hundred talents, and one thousand seven hundred and seventy five shekels over, *ver. 25, 26.* Of this they made the sockets, into which the boards of the tabernacle were let, and on which they rested; so that they were as the foundation of the tabernacle, *ver. 26, 27.* The silver amounted to about thirty four thousand pound of our money. The raising of the gold by voluntary contribution, and of the silver by way of tribute, shews that either way may be taken for the defraying of publick expences; provided that nothing be done with partiality.

3. The brass, though less valuable, was of use not only for the brasen altar, but the sockets of the court, which probably in other tents were of wood: But it is promised, *Isa. lx. 17. For wood I will bring brass.* See how liberal the people were, and how faithful the workmen were, both which ought to be followed as good examples.

### C H A P. XXXIX.

*This chapter gives us an account of the finishing of the work of the tabernacle. 1. The last thing prepared was the holy garments. The ephod and its curious girdle, ver. 1—5. The onyx-stones for the shoulders, ver. 6, 7. The breast-plate with the precious stones in it, ver. 8—21. The robe of the ephod, ver. 22—26. The coats, bonnets, and breeches for the inferior priests, ver. 27—29. And the plate of the holy crown, ver. 30, 31. 2. A summary account of the whole work, as it was presented to Moses when it was all finished, ver. 32—43.*

1. **A**ND of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses. 2. And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 3. And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires; to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, with cunning work. 4. They made shoulder pieces for it, to couple it together: by the two edges it was coupled together. 5. And the curious girdle of his ephod that was upon it, was of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses. 6. And they wrought onyx-stones enclosed in ouches of gold, graven as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel. 7. And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, that they should be stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses. 8. And he made the breast-plate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod: of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen. 9. It was four-square, they made the breast-plate double: a span was the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, being doubled. 10. And they set in it four rows of stones: the first row was a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this was the first row. 11. And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. 12. And the

third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. 13. And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: they were inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings. 14. And the stones were according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes. 15. And they made upon the breast-plate chains, at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold. 16. And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold rings, and put the two rings in the two ends of the breast-plate. 17. And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breast-plate. 18. And the two ends of the two wreathen chains, they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, before it. 19. And they made two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breast-plate, upon the border of it, which was on the side of the ephod inward. 20. And they made two other golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod, underneath, towards the fore-part of it, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. 21. And they did bind the breast-plate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod, with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breast-plate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses. 22. And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23. And there was a hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, with a band round about the hole, that it should not rent. 24. And they made upon the hems of the robe, pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and twined linen. 25. And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates, upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates. 26. A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister in; as the LORD commanded Moses. 27. And they made coats of fine linen, of woven work, for Aaron and for his sons, 28. And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen, 29. And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needle-work; as the LORD commanded Moses. 30. And they made the plate of the holy crown, of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, **HOLINESS TO THE LORD.** 31. And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten it on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.

In this account of the making of the priests garments, according to the instructions given, *chap. xxviii.* we may observe, 1. That the priests garments are called here cloaths of service, *ver. 1.* Note, Those that wear robes of honour must look upon them as cloaths of service; for those upon whom honour is put, from them service is expected. It is said of those that are arrayed in white robes, that they *are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple,* *Rev. vii. 13, 15.* Holy garments, were not made for men to sleep in, or to strut in, but to do service in, and then they are indeed for glory and beauty. The son of man himself *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.* 2. That all the six paragraphs here, which give a distinct account of the making of these holy garments, conclude with those words, *as the Lord commanded Moses, ver. 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31.* The like is not in any of the foregoing accounts, as if in these, more than any other of the appurtenances of the tabernacle, they had a particular regard to the divine appointment, both for warrant, and for direction. It is an intimation to all the Lord's ministers to make the word of God their rule in all their ministrations, and to act in observance of, and obedience to, the command of God. 3. That these garments, in conformity to the rest of the furniture of the tabernacle, were very rich and splendid; the church in its infancy was thus taught, thus pleased, with the rudiments of this world; but now under the gospel, which is the ministration of the Spirit, to affect and impose such pompous habits as the church of Rome doth, under pretence of decency and instruction, is to betray the liberty wherewith Christ has made free, and to entangle the church again in the bondage of those carnal ordinances, which were imposed only till the time of reformation. 4. That they were all shadows of good things to come, but the substance is Christ, and the grace of the gospel; when therefore the substance is come, it is a jest to be fond of the shadow. (1.) Christ is our great high priest; he put upon him the cloaths of service, when he undertook the work of our redemption. Arrayed himself with the gifts and graces of the Spirit,



rit, which he received not by measure. Girded himself with the curious girdle of resolution, to go through with his undertaking. Charged himself with all God's spiritual Israel, bare them on his shoulders, carried them in his bosom, laid them near his heart, engraved them on the palms of his hands, and presented them in the breast-plate of Judgment unto his Father. And (lastly) he crowned himself with holiness to the Lord, consecrating his whole undertaking to the honour of his Father's holiness: Now consider how great this man is. 2. True believers are spiritual priests. The clean linen with which all their clothes of service must be made, is the righteousness of saints, Rev. xix. 8. and Holiness to the Lord must be so written upon their foreheads, that all who converse with them may see and say, That they bear the image of God's holiness, and are devoted to the praise of it.

32. Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they. 33. And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his tables, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets, 34. And the covering of rams skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers skins, and the vail of the covering, 35. The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat, 36. The table, and all the vessels thereof, and the shew-bread, 37. The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light, 38. And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door, 39. The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 40. The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court-gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation, 41. The clothes of service to do service in the holy place, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons garments to minister in the priests office. 42. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work. 43. And Moses did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

Observe here, 1. That the builders of the tabernacle made very good dispatch. It was not much more than five months from the beginning to the finishing of it. Though there was a great deal of fine work about it, such as used to be the work of time, embroidering and engraving, not only in gold, but in precious stones, yet they went through with it in a little time. Church work useth to be slow work, but they made quick work of this, and yet did it with the greatest exactness imaginable. For, (1.) many hands were employed, all unanimous, and not vying with each other. This expedited the business, and made it easy. (2.) The workmen were taught of God, and so were kept from making blunders, which would have retarded them. (3.) The people were hearty and zealous in the work, and impatient till it was finished. God had prepared their hearts, and then the thing was done suddenly, 2 Chron. xxix. 36. Resolution and Industry, and a cheerful application of mind will, by the grace of God, bring a great deal of good work to pass in a little time; less than one would expect. 2. That they punctually observed their orders, and did not in the least vary from them. They did it according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, ver. 32, 42. Note, God's work must be done in every thing according to his own will. His institutions neither need nor admit mens inventions to make them either more beautiful, or more likely to answer the intention of them. Add thou not unto his words: God is pleased with willing worship, but not with will worship. 3. That they brought all their work to Moses, and submitted it to his inspection and censure, ver. 33. He knew what he had ordered them to make, and now the particulars were called over, and all produced, that Moses might see both that they had made all, and omitted nothing, and that they had made all according to the instructions given them; and that, if they had made a mistake in any thing, it might be forthwith rectified. Thus they shewed respect to Moses, who was set over them in the Lord; not objecting, that Moses did not understand such work, and therefore, why should they submit it to his judgment? No, that God who gave them so much knowledge as to do the work, gave them also so much humility, as to be willing to have it examined, and compared with the model. Moses was in authority, and they would pay a deference to his place: *The Spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets.* And besides, though they knew how to do the work better than Moses, Moses had a better and more ex-

act idea of the model than they had, and therefore they could not be well pleased with their own work, unless they had his approbation. Thus in all the services of religion, we should labour to be accepted of the Lord. 4. That Moses upon search found all done according to the rule, ver. 43. Moses both for their satisfaction, and for his own, did look upon all the work, piece by piece, and behold they had done it according to the pattern shewed him, for the same that shewed him the pattern, guided their hand in the work. All the copies of God's grace exactly agree with the original of his counsels: what God works in us, and by us, is the fulfilling of the good pleasure of his own goodness; And when the mystery of God shall be finished, and all his performances come to be compared with his purposes, it will appear, that behold, all is done according to the counsel of his own will, not one iota or tittle of which shall fall to the ground, or be varied from. 5. That Moses blessed them. (1.) He commended them, and signified his approbation of all they had done. He did not find fault where there was none, as some do, who think they disparage their own judgment, if they do not find something amiss, in the best and most accomplished performance. In all this work it is probable there might have been found here and there a stitch amiss, and a stroke awry, which would have served for an over-curious and censorious critick to animadvert upon, but Moses had too good an eye to spy small faults where there were no great ones. Note, All governors must be a praise to them that do well, and not only a terror to evil-doers; Why should any take a pride in being hard to be pleased? (2.) He not only praised them, but prayed for them: He blessed them as one having authority, for the less is blessed of the better. We read not of any wages Moses paid them for their work, but this blessing he gave them. For though ordinarily the labourer be worthy of his hire, yet in this case, 1. they wrought for themselves. The honour and comfort of God's tabernacle among them would be recompence enough, *If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thy self.* 2. They had their meat from heaven on free cost, for themselves and their families, and their raiment waxed not old upon them; so that they neither needed wages, nor had reason to expect any. *Freely ye have received, freely give.* The obligations we lie under, both in duty and interest to serve God, are sufficient to quicken us to our work, though we had not a reward in prospect. But, 3. This Blessing in the name of the Lord was wages enough for all their work. Those whom God employs he will bless, and those whom he blesteth, they are blessed indeed. The blessing he commands is life for evermore.

## C H A P. XL.

In this chapter, 1. Orders are given for the setting up of the tabernacle, and the fixing of all the appurtenances of it in their proper places, ver. 1—8. and the consecrating of it, ver. 8—11. and of the priests, ver. 12—15. 2. Care taken to do all this, and as when it was appointed to be done, ver. 16—33. 3. God's taking possession of it by the cloud, ver. 34—38.

1. **A**ND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2. On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation; 3. And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail: 4. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it, and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. 5. And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle. 6. And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt-offering, before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. 7. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation, and the altar, and shalt put water therein. 8. And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate. 9. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy. 10. And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt-offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. 11. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it. 12. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. 13. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priests office. 14. And thou shalt bring his sons and clothe them with coats: 15. And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priests office: for their anointing shall surely



ly be an everlasting priesthood, throughout their generations.

The materials and furniture of the tabernacle had been viewed severally, and approved, and now they must be put together. 1. God here directs Moses to set up the tabernacle, and the utensils of it in their places. Though the work of the tabernacle was finished, and every thing ready for rearing, and the people, no doubt, very desirous to see it up, yet Moses will not do it till he has express orders for the doing of it. It is good to see God going before us in every step, *Psal. xxxvii. 23.* The time for doing this is fixed to *the first day of the first month, ver. 2.* which wanted but fourteen days of a year since they came out of Egypt; and a good year's work there was done in it. Probably the work was made ready but just at the end of the year, so that the appointing of this day gave no delay, or next none, to this good work. We must not put off any necessary duty under pretence of waiting for some remarkable day, the present season is the most convenient; but the tabernacle happening to be set up *on the first day of the first month*, intimates, that it is good to begin the year with some good work. Let him that is the first, have the first; and let the things of his kingdom be first fought. In Hezekiah's time we find they began to sanctify the temple *on the first day of the first month, 2 Chron. xxix. 17.* The new moon (which by their computation was the first day of every month) was observed by them with some solemnity; and therefore this first new moon of the year was thus made remarkable. Note, When a new year begins, we should think of serving God more and better than we did the year before.

Moses is particularly ordered to set up the tabernacle it self first, in which God would dwell, and would be served, *ver. 2.* Then to put the ark in its place, and draw the vail before it, *ver. 3.* Then to fix the table, and the candlestick, and the altar of incense, without the vail, *ver. 4, 5.* and to fix the hanging of the door before the door. Then in the court he must place the altar of burnt-offering, and the laver, *ver. 6, 7.* and lastly, He must set up the curtains of the court, and a hanging for a court-gate. And all this would be easily done in one day; many hands no doubt being employed in it, under the direction of Moses.

2. He directs Moses, when he had set up the tabernacle and all the furniture of it, to consecrate it and them, by anointing them with the oil which was prepared for the purpose, *chap. xxx. 26, &c.* It was there ordered that this should be done, here it was ordered that it should be done now, *ver. 9, 10, 11.* Observe, Every thing was sanctified when it was put in its proper place, and not till then, for till then it was not fit for the use to which it was to be sanctified. As every thing is beautiful in its season, so is every thing in its place.

3. He directs him to consecrate Aaron and his sons; when the goods were brought into God's house, they were marked first, and then servants were hired to bear the vessels of the Lord; and they must be clean who were put into that office, *ver. 12, 13, 14, 15.* The law, which was now ordered to be put in execution, we had before, *chap. xxix.* Thus in the visible church, which is God's tabernacle among men, it is requisite, there be ministers to keep the charge of the sanctuary; and that they receive the anointing.

16. Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he. 17. And it came to pass, in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up. 18. And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastned his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars. 19. And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses. 20. And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy-seat above upon the ark. 21. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses. 22. And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the vail. 23. And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24. And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward. 25. And he lighted the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses. 26. And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the vail. 27. And he burnt sweet incense thereon, as the LORD commanded Moses. 28. And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle. 29. And he put the altar of burnt-offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering; as the

LORD commanded Moses. 30. And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal. 31. And Moses, and Aaron, and his sons, washed their hands and their feet thereat. 32. When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. 33. And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court-gate: so Moses finished the work.

When the tabernacle and the furniture of it were prepared, they did not put off the rearing of it till they came to Canaan, though they now hoped to be there very shortly; but, in obedience to the will of God, they set it up in the midst of their camp, while they were in the wilderness. Those that are unsettled in the world, must not think that that will excuse them in their continued irreligion; as if it were time enough to begin to serve God when they begin to be settled in the world: No; a tabernacle for God is a very needful and profitable companion even in a wilderness, especially considering that our carcasses may fall in that wilderness, and we may be fixed in another world before we come to fix in this.

The rearing of the tabernacle was a good day's work; the consecrating of it, and of the priests, was done some days after. Here we have an account only of that new-year's-day's work. 1. Moses not only did all that God directed him to do, but in the order that God appointed; for God will be fought in the due order. 2. To each particular there is added an express reference to the divine appointment, which Moses governed himself by as carefully and conscientiously as the workmen did; and therefore, as before, so here it is oft repeated, *as the Lord commanded Moses*, seven times in less than fourteen verses. Moses himself, as great a man as he was, would not pretend to vary from the institution, neither to add to it, nor diminish from it, in the least punctilio. They that command others, must remember that their master also is in heaven, and they must do as they are commanded. 3. That which was to be veiled, he veiled, *ver. 21.* and that which was to be used, he used immediately for the instruction of the priests, that by seeing him do the several offices, they might learn to do them the more dexterously: Though Moses was not properly a priest, yet he is numbered among the priests, *Psal. xcix. 6.* and the Jewish writers call him, the priest of the priests; what he did, he did by special warrant and direction from God, rather as a prophet, or law-giver, than as a priest. He set the wheels a going, and then left the work in the hands of the appointed ministry. (1.) When he had placed the table, he set the shew-bread in order upon it, *ver. 23.* for God will never have his table unfurnished. (2.) As soon as he had fixed the candlestick, he *lighted the lamps before the Lord*, *ver. 25.* Even that dark dispensation would not admit of unlighted candles. (3.) The golden altar being put in its place, immediately he *burnt sweet incense thereon*, *ver. 27.* for God's altar must be a smoking altar. (4.) The altar of burnt-offering was no sooner set up in the court of the tabernacle, but he had a *burnt-offering, and a meat-offering, ready to offer upon it*, *ver. 29.* Some think, though this be mentioned here, it was not done till some time after; but it seems to me that he presently began the ceremony of its consecration, though it was not compleated of seven days. (5.) At the laver likewise, when he had fixed that, Moses himself washed his hands and feet. Thus, in all these instances, he not only shewed the priests how to do their duty, but has taught us, that God's gifts are intended for use, and not barely for shew. Though the altars, and table, and candlestick, were fresh and new, he did not say it was a pity to sully them; no, he handled them immediately. Talents were given to be occupied, not to be buried.

34. Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: 37. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not, till the day that it was taken up. 38. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

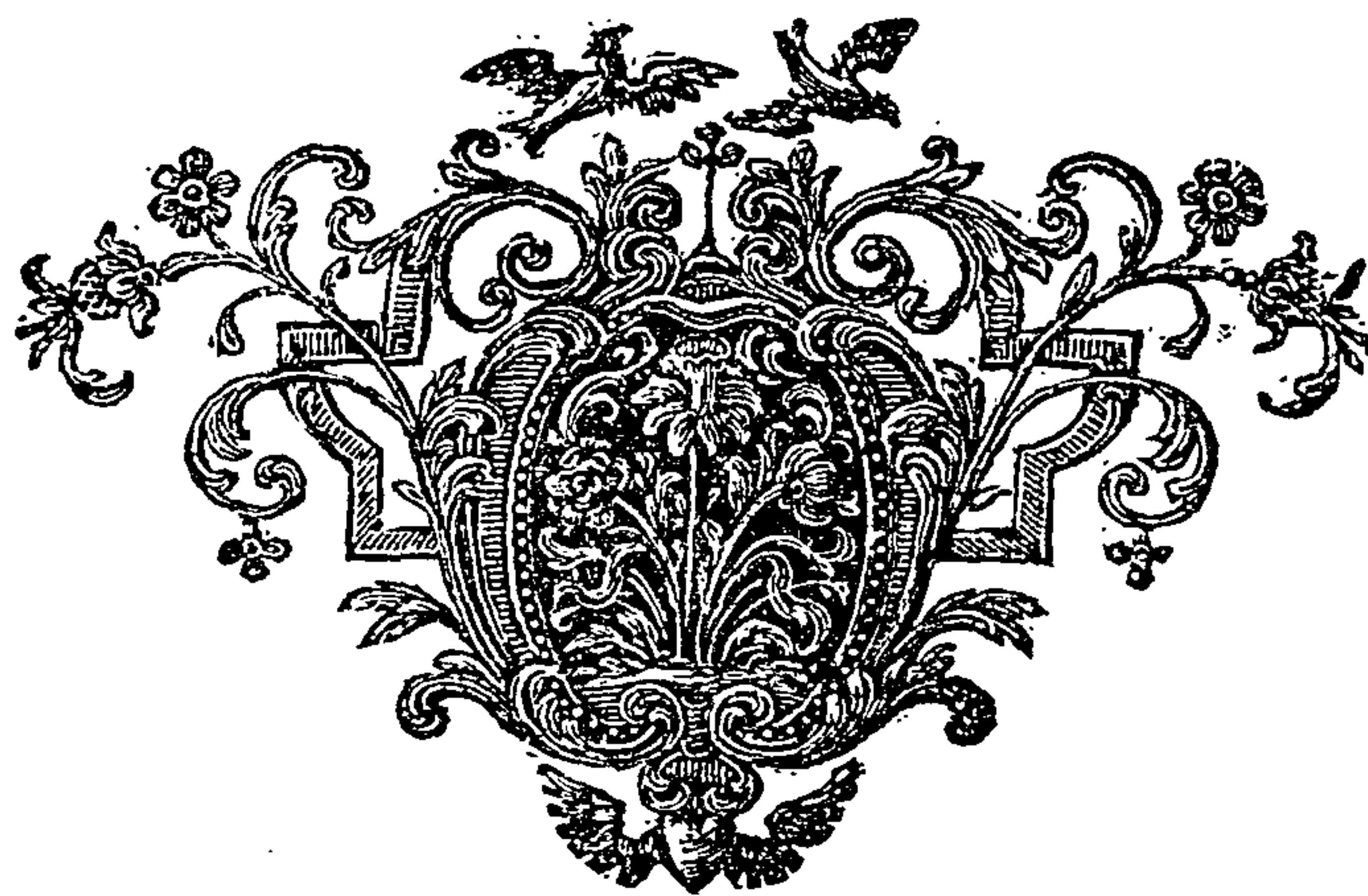
As when in the creation God had finished this earth, which he designed for man's habitation, he made man, and put him in possession of it, so when Moses had finished the tabernacle, which was designed for God's dwelling place among men, God came and took possession of it. The *Shechinah*, the divine eternal Word, though not yet made flesh, yet as a prelude to that, came and dwelt among them, *Joh. i. 14.* This was henceforward the *place of his throne*, and *the place of the soles of his feet*, *Ezek. xliii. 7.* here he resided, here he ruled. By the visible tokens of God's coming among



mong them to take possession of the tabernacle, he testified, both the return of his favour to them, which they had forfeited by the golden calf, *chap. xxxiii. 7.* and his gracious acceptance of all the expence they had been at, and all the care and pains they had taken about the tabernacle. Thus God owned them, shewed himself well pleased with what they had done, and abundantly rewarded them. Note, God will dwell with those that prepare him a habitation. The broken and contrite heart, the clean and holy heart, that is furnished for his service, and devoted to his honour, shall be his rest for ever, *here will Christ dwell* by faith, *Eph. iii. 17.* Where God has a throne and an altar in the soul, there is a living temple. And God will be sure to own and crown the operations of his own grace, and the observance of his own appointments.

As God had manifested himself upon mount Sinai, so he did now in this new erected tabernacle. We read, *chap. xxiv. 16.* that *the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai*, which is said to be like *devouring fire*, *ver. 17.* and that *the cloud covered that glory*: Accordingly when God descended to take possession of his house, the cloud covered it on the outside, and *the glory of the Lord filled it* within; to which probably there is an allusion, *Zech. ii. 5.* where God promiseth to be a *wall of fire round about Jerusalem*, (and the pillar of cloud was by night a pillar of fire) *and the glory in the midst of her.* 1. *The cloud covered the tent*; that same cloud, which, as the chariot or pavilion of the *Shechinah*, had come up before them out of Egypt, and had led them hither, now settled upon the tabernacle, and hovered over it, even in the hottest and clearest day; for it was none of those clouds which the sun scatters. This cloud was intended to be; (1.) A token of God's presence constantly visible day and night, *ver. 38.* to all Israel, even to those that lay in the remotest corners of the camp, that they might never again make a question of it, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not?* That very cloud, which had already been so pregnant of wonders, in the red sea, and on mount Sinai, sufficient to prove God in it of a truth, was continually *in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys*; so that they were inexcusable, if they believed not their own eyes. (2.) A concealment of the tabernacle, and the glory of God in it. God did indeed dwell among them, but he dwelt in a cloud; *Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself*: Blessed be God for the gospel of Christ, in which *we all with open face behold as in a glass*, not as in a cloud, *the glory of the Lord.* (3.) A protection of the tabernacle: They had sheltered it with one covering upon another, but after all the cloud that covered it was its best guard. Those that dwell in the house of the Lord, are hid there, and are safe under the divine protection, *Psal. xxvii. 4, 5.* Yet this which was then a peculiar fa-

vour to the tabernacle, is promised to every dwelling place of mount Sion, *Isa. iv. 5.* for *upon all the glory shall be a defence.* (4.) A guide to the camp of Israel in their march through the wilderness, *ver. 36, 37.* While the cloud continued on the tabernacle, they rested; when it removed, they removed and followed it, as being purely under a divine conduct. This is spoken of more fully, *Numb. ix. 15, &c.* and mentioned with thankfulness to the glory of God long after, *Neh. ix. 19.* *Psal. lxxviii. 14. cv. 39.* As before the tabernacle was set up, the Israelites had the cloud for their guide, which appeared sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; but from henceforward rested on the tabernacle, and was to be found there only; so the church had divine revelation for its guide from the first, before the scriptures were written; but since the making up of that canon, it rests in that as its tabernacle, and there only it is to be found. As in the creation, the light which was made the first day, centred in the sun the fourth day. Blessed be God for the law and the testimony. 2. *The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle*, *ver. 34, 35.* The *Shechinah* now made an awful and pompous entry into the tabernacle, through the outer part of which it passed into the most holy place, as the presence chamber, and there seated it self between the cherubims. It was in light and fire, and for ought we know, no otherwise, that the *Shechinah* made it self visible; for *God is light; our God is a consuming fire*; with these the tabernacle was now filled, yet as before the bush, so now the curtains were not consumed, or so much as singed by this fire; for to those that have received the anointing, the terrible majesty of God is not destroying. Yet now so dazling was the light, and so dreadful was the fire, that Moses was *not able to enter into the tent of the congregation*, at the door of which he attended, till the splendor was a little abated, and the glory of the Lord retired within the vail, *ver. 35.* This shews how terrible the glory and majesty of God is, and how unable the greatest and best of men are to stand before him. The divine light and fire let forth in their full strength, will overpower the strongest heads, and the purest hearts. But what Moses could not do in that *he was weak through the flesh*, our Lord Jesus has done, whom God *caused to draw near and approach*, and as the fore-runner, *he is for us entered*, and has invited us to come boldly even to the mercy-seat. He was *able to enter into the holy place not made with hands*, *Heb. ix. 24.* nay, he is himself the true tabernacle, *filled with the glory of God*, *John i. 14.* even with that divine grace and truth which was figured by this fire and light. In him the *Shechinah* took up its rest for ever, for in him *dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily.* Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.





A N

## E X P O S I T I O N

W I T H

## P R A C T I C A L O B S E R V A T I O N S

Upon the Third Book of Moses, called

## L E V I T I C U S.

*There is nothing historical in all this book of Leviticus, except the account it gives us, chap. viii. and ix. Of the consecration of the priesthood; chap. x. Of the punishment of Nadab and Abihu, by the hand of God, for offering strange fire; and that of Shelomith's son, by the hand of the magistrate, for blasphemy, chap. xxiv. All the rest of the book is taken up with the laws, chiefly the ecclesiastical laws, which God gave to Israel by Moses, concerning their sacrifices and offerings, their meats and drinks, and divers washings, and other the peculiarities, by which God set that people apart for himself, and distinguished them from other nations: all which were shadows of good things to come, which are realized and superseded by the gospel of Christ. — We call the book Leviticus, from the Septuagint, because it contains the laws and ordinances of the levitical priesthood, (as it is called Heb. vii. 11.) and the ministrations of it; the Levites were principally charged with these institutions, both to do their part, and to teach the people theirs. — We read in the close of the foregoing book, of the setting up of the tabernacle, which was to be the place of worship; and as that was framed according to the pattern, so must the ordinances of worship be, which were there to be administered. In these the divine appointment was as particular as in the former, and must be as punctually observed. The remaining record of these abrogated laws is of use to us, for the strengthening of our faith in Jesus Christ, as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; and for the encrease of our thankfulness to God, that by him we are freed from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and live in the times of reformation.*

## C H A P. I.

*This book begins with the laws concerning sacrifices, of which the most ancient were the burnt-offerings; about which God gives Moses instructions in this chapter. Orders are here given how that sort of sacrifice must be managed. 1. If it were a bullock out of the herd, ver. 3—9. 2. If it were a sheep or goat, a lamb or kid, out of the flock, ver. 10—13. 3. If it were a turtle-dove, or a young pigeon, ver. 14—17. And whether the offering were more or less valuable in it self, if it was offered with an upright heart, according to these laws, it was accepted of God.*

**A**ND the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, 2. Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattel, even of the herd, and of the flock.

Observe here, 1. It is taken for granted, that people would be inclined to bring offerings to the Lord. The very light of nature directs man, some way or other, to do honour to his maker, and pay him homage as his lord: Revealed religion supposeth natural religion an ancient and early institution, since the fall had directed men to glorify God by sacrifice; which was an implicit acknowledgment of their having received all from God as creatures, and their having forfeited all to him as sinners. A conscience thoroughly convinced of dependance and guilt, would be willing to come before God with *thousands of rams*, Mic. vi. 6. 2. Provision is made that men should not indulge their own fancies, nor become vain in their imaginations and inventions about their sacrifices, lest while they pretended to honour God, they should really dishonour him, and do that which was unworthy of him. Every thing therefore is directed to be done with a due decorum, and by a certain rule; and so as that the sacrifices might be most significant, both of the great sacrifice of atonement which Christ was to offer in the fulness of time, and of the spiritual sacrifices of acknowledgment which believers should offer daily. 3. God gave those laws to Israel by Moses; nothing is more frequently repeated than this,

*The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel. God could have spoken it to the children of Israel himself, as he did the ten commandments, but he chose to deliver it to them by Moses, because they had desired he would no more speak to them himself, and he had designed that Moses should above all the prophets be a type of Christ, by whom God would in these last days speak to us, Heb. i. 1. By other prophets God sent messages to his people, but by Moses he gave them laws; and therefore he was fit to typify him to whom the Father hath given all judgment. And besides, the treasure of divine revelation was always to be put into earthen vessels, that our faith might be tried, and that the excellency of the power might be of God. 4. God spake to him out of the tabernacle. As soon as ever the Shechinah had taken possession of its new habitation, in token of the acceptance of what was done, God talked with Moses from the mercy-seat, while he attended without the vail, or rather at the door, hearing a voice only; and it is probable he wrote what he heard at that time, to prevent any mistake, or slip of memory in the rehearsal of it. The tabernacle was set up to be a place of communion between God and Israel; there, where they performed their services to God, God revealed his will to them; thus by the word and prayer, we now have fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ, Acts vi. 4. When we speak to God we must desire to hear from him, and reckon it a great favour that he is pleased to speak to us. The Lord called to Moses, not to come near; under that dispensation, even Moses must keep his distance; but to attend, and hearken to what should be said. A letter less than ordinary in the Hebrew word for called, the Jewish critics tell us, intimates, that God spake in a still small voice. The moral law was given with terror from a burning mountain in thunder and lightning; but the remedial law of sacrifice was given more gently from a mercy-seat, because that was typical of the grace of the gospel, which is the ministration of life and peace.*

3. If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. 4. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering: and it shall be



be accepted for him to make atonement for him. 5. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests Aarons sons shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 6. And he shall slay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces. 7. And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire. 8. And the priests Aarons sons shall lay the parts, the head and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire, which is upon the altar. 9. But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire of a sweet favour unto the LORD.

If a man were rich and could afford it, it is supposed that he would bring his burnt-sacrifice, with which he designed to honour God, out of his herd of larger cattle: He that considers that God is the best that is, will resolve to give him the best he has, else he gives him not the glory due unto his name. Now if a man determined to kill a beef, not for a feast for his family and friends, but for a sacrifice to his God, these rules must be religiously observed.

1. The beast to be offered must be a male, and without blemish; and the best bull he had in his pasture: being designed purely for the honour of him that is infinitely perfect, it ought to be the most perfect in its kind. This signified the compleat strength and purity that was in Christ the dying sacrifice; and the sincerity of heart, and unblameableness of life, that should be in christians, who are presented to God as living sacrifices. But literally in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female; nor is any natural blemish in the body, a bar to our acceptance with God, but only the moral defects and deformities of the soul, by sin. 2. The owner must offer it of his own voluntary will: What is done in religion, so as to please God, must be done by no other constraint but that of love. God accepts the willing people, and the chearful giver. Ainsworth and others read it, not as the principle, but as the end of offering; let him offer it for his favourable acceptance before the Lord. Let him propose this to himself, as his end in bringing his sacrifice; and let his eye be fixed steddily upon that end, that he may be accepted of the Lord: And those only shall find acceptance, who sincerely desire and design it in all their religious services, 2 Cor. v. 9. 3. It must be offered at the door of the tabernacle, where the brazen altar of burnt-offerings stood, which sanctified the gift, and not elsewhere. He must offer it at the door, as one unworthy to enter, and acknowledging that there is no admission for a sinner into covenant and communion with God but by sacrifice; but at the tabernacle of the congregation, in token of his communion with the whole church of Israel, even in this personal service. 4. The offerer must put his hand upon the head of his offering, ver. 4. He must put both his hands, say the Jewish doctors, with all his might between the horns of the beast, signifying thereby, (1.) The transferring of all his right to, and interest in the beast to God, actually and by a manual delivery resigning it to his service. (2.) An acknowledgment that he deserved to die, and would have been willing to die, if God had required it for the serving of his honour, and the obtaining of his favour. (3.) A dependance upon the sacrifice, as an instituted type of the great sacrifice, on which the iniquity of us all was to be laid. The mystical signification of the sacrifices, and especially this rite, some think the apostle means by the doctrine of *laying on of hands*, Heb. vi. 2. which typified evangelical faith. The offerer's putting his hand on the head of the offering, was to signify his desire and hope that it might be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Though the burnt-offerings had not respect to any particular sin, as the sin-offering had, yet they were to make atonement for sin in general; and he that laid his hand on its head was to confess, that he had left undone what he ought to have done, and had done that which he ought not to have done; and to pray, that though he deserved to die himself, the death of his sacrifice might be accepted for the expiating of his guilt. 5. The sacrifice was to be killed by the priests or Levites, before the Lord, i. e. in a devout, religious manner, and with an eye to God and his honour. This signified that our Lord Jesus was to make his soul, or life, an offering for sin: Messiah the prince must be cut off as a sacrifice, *but not for himself*, Dan. ix. 26. It signified also that in christians, who are living sacrifices, the brutal part must be mortified or killed, the flesh crucified with its corrupt affections and lusts, and all the appetites of the meer animal life. 6. The priests were to *sprinkle the blood upon the altar*, ver. 5. for the blood being the life, that was it that made atonement for the soul. This signified the direct and actual regard which our Lord Jesus had to the satisfaction of his father's justice, and the securing of his injured honour in the shedding of his blood; *he offered himself without spot to God*. It also signified the pacifying and purifying of our consciences by the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ* upon them by faith, 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. x. 22. 7. The beast was to be slayed and decently cut up, and divided into its several joints or pieces, according to the art of the butcher; and then all the pieces, with the head and fat, the legs and inwards being first washed, were to be burnt together

upon the altar, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. *But to what purpose* (would some say) *was this waste?* Why should all this good meat, that might have been given to the poor, and have served their hungry families for food a great while, be burnt together to ashes? So was the will of God; and it is not for us to object, or find fault with it. When it was burnt for the honour of God, in obedience to his command, and to signify spiritual blessings, it was really better bestowed, and better answered the end of its creation, than when it was used as food for man. We must never reckon that lost that is laid out for God. The burning of the sacrifice signified the sharp sufferings of Christ, and the devout affections with which, as a holy fire, christians must offer up themselves, *their whole spirit, soul and body, unto God*. Lastly, This is said to be an offering of a sweet savour, or favour of rest, unto the Lord. The burning of flesh is unsavoury in it self, but this, as an act of obedience to a divine command, and a type of Christ, was well pleasing to God; he was reconciled to the offerer, and did himself take a complacency in that reconciliation. He rested, and was refreshed with these institutions of his grace, as at first with his works of creation, *Exod. xxxi. 17.* rejoicing therein, *Psal. civ. 31.* Christ's offering of himself to God, is said to be of a *sweet smelling savour*, Ephes. v. 2. And the spiritual sacrifices of christians are said to be *acceptable to God through Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

10. And if his offering be of the flock, namely of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt-sacrifice, he shall bring it a male without blemish. 11. And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the LORD; and the priests Aarons sons shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar. 12. And he shall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar. 13. But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priests shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet favour unto the LORD. 14. And if the burnt-sacrifice for his offering to the LORD be of fowls, then he shall bring his offering of turtle-doves, or of young pigeons. 15. And the priest shall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn it on the altar: and the blood thereof shall be wrung out at the side of the altar. 16. And he shall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and cast it beside the altar, on the east part, by the place of the ashes. 17. And he shall cleave it, with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet favour unto the LORD.

Here we have the laws concerning the burnt-offerings which were of the flock, or of the fowls. Those of the middle rank, that could not well afford to offer a bullock would bring a sheep or a goat; and those that were not able to do that, should be accepted of God, if they brought a turtle-dove, or a pigeon: For God in his law, and in his gospel, as well as in his providence, considers the poor. It is observable, that those creatures were chosen for sacrifice, which were most mild and gentle, harmless and inoffensive; to typify the innocence and meekness that was in Christ, and to teach the innocence and meekness that should be in christians. Directions are here given,

1. Concerning the burnt-offerings of the flock, ver. 10. and the method of managing these is much the same with that of the beeves; only it is ordered here that the sacrifice should be killed on the side of the altar northward; which though mentioned here only, it is likely was to be observed concerning the former, and other sacrifices. Probably on that side of the altar, there was the largest vacant space; and room for the priests to turn them in. It was of old observed, that fair weather comes out of the north, and that the north wind drives away rain; and by these sacrifices the storms of God's wrath are scattered, and the light of God's countenance is obtained, which is more pleasant than the brightest fairest weather.

2. Concerning those of the fowls. They must be either turtle-doves, and if so, they must be old turtles, (say the Jews) or pigeons, and if so, they must be young pigeons. What was most acceptable at mens tables, must be brought to God's altar. In the offering of these fowls, 1. The head must be wrung off, quite off, say some, others think only pinched so as to kill the bird, and yet leave the head hanging to the body: But it seems more likely, that it was to be quite separated, for it was to be burnt first. 2. The blood was to be squeezed out on the side of the altar. 3. The garbages with the feathers were to be thrown by upon the dunghil. 4. The body was to be opened, sprinkled with salt, and then burned upon the altar. This sacrifice of birds, the Jews say, was one of the most difficult services the priests had to do, to teach those that minister in holy things, to be as solicitous for the salvation of the souls of the poor as of